THE RELATIONS OF THE HOUSE OF BIKANER WITH THE CENTRAL POWERS (1465 TO 1949)

By

KARNI SINGH

A Thesis submitted to the
University of Bombay
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy.



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Heras Institute of Indian History & Culture,
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to the revered memory of

MATA KARNIJI

Through whose blessings and devine guidance generations of brave men from Rao Bikaji to his descendants today have stood firmly, and in many cases died fighting to preserve the noble traditions of honesty, chivalry, kindness and service to the people, objectives they always held nearest to their hearts.

Dedicated further to the men who fought for India's freedom so that we Indians might breathe the free air, as free citizens of a free country.

PLATE I



Shri Karniji, the family deity of the Bikaner rulers.

PLATE II



1. Rao Bikaji; 2. Rao Naroji; 3. Rao Lunkaranji; 4. Rao Jaitsiji; 5. Rao Kalyanmalji; 6. Raja Rai Singhji; 7. Raja Dalpat Singhji; 8. Raja Sur Singhji; 9. Raja Karan Singhji; 10. Maharaja Anup Singhji; 11. Maharaja Sarup Singhji; 12. Maharaja Sujan Singhji; 13. Maharaja Zorawar Singhji; 14. Maharaja Gaj Singhji; 15. Maharaja Raj Singhji; 16. Maharaja Pratap Singhji; 17. Maharaja Surat Singhji; 18. Maharaja Ratan Singhji; 19. Maharaja Sardar Singhji; 20. Maharaja Dungar Singhji; 21. Maharaja Ganga Singhji; 22. Maharaja Sadul Singhji; 23. Maharaja Karni Singhji.

PREFACE

The thesis attempts to offer a comprehensive record of the relationship which the House of Bikaner built with the rulers of Delhi during a span of close to five centuries. The material for the thesis is found both in original sources and numerous works of modern writers. It was a relationship between two bodies so dissimilar in their aims and objects that a research student has often to change the angle of his approach to suit the changing pattern of history over the centuries. The nature of such a relationship largely depended upon the temperaments and character of the imperial authorities and the rulers of Bikaner. The reign of a Maharaja witnessed so many vicissitudes in his political and personal relationship with the rulers of Delhi that it took innumerable turns every now and then. In this thesis an attempt has been made to examine in detail the causes and consequences of all these reactions and changes disturbing the smooth continuity of the relationship, at times straining the relationship and at other times cementing it further.

The narrative opens up amidst a tumultous war and din when, disappointed in his hopes to recover the seat of his ancestors in Central Asia, Babar raided India, defeated the Lodis and started towards Kanwaha with a view to founding a new empire. In the bloody battle of Kanwaha where the Rajput chivalry, dauntless even in death, was blasted before Babar's terrible Turkish ordnance. Rao Kalyanmal, while still heir-apparent, took part against the invading Mughal hordes; Rao Jaitsi successfully repelled a Mughal invasion and forced Kamran to flee back. After this period of clash and conflict, the House of Timur as well as the House of Bikaner realised the importance of their respective adversaries and entered into a relationship which was both cordial and co-operative. While the imperial Mughals were always prepared to respect gallant fighters whose assistance they needed for curbing the Afghan power, the rulers of Bikaner found that a career in the imperial service could

afford wide opportunities for statecraft and soldiering for which they were so well-fitted. This went to constitute the corner-stone of a happy relationship under whose aegis Raja Rai Singh became one of the most distinguished generals of emperor Akbar, saw service on every frontier of the Empire and was rewarded by the grant of the exalted rank of Commander of five thousand, a grant of territory and the title of Raja.

The tradition of imperial service having been firmly established in the Bikaner ruling House, Raja after Raja won glory and honour in defence of the splendid empire of the Mughals. But the empire which the House of Bikaner had supported so long and so faithfully, ultimately started crumbling to decay and a time came when it could no longer maintain order within its boundaries and became the merest shadow of a great name. With the downfall of the Mughal empire comes to close a brilliant era of political and military relationship which made it possible for the rulers of Bikaner to show their valour in different parts of India and establish their reputation far and wide.

After the downfall of the Mughal Empire till the advent of the British, Bikaner enjoyed practically complete independence; neither the depredations of the Pindaris, nor the adventures of the Marathas could cause any suffering to the Rathore principality of Bikaner situated in the extreme north amongst the Rajputana States, more particularly because of its position of isolation. Even then, the Rathore rulers of Bikaner found their position untenable owing to the forces of internal anarchy which practically forced Maharaja Surat Singh to welcome the terms which the rising power of the British offered.

In 1818, a Treaty of Perpetual Friendship, Alliance and Unity of interests was signed - a treaty which was observed in spirit as well as in letter by both the high contracting parties till the year 1947 when the British paramountcy lapsed. During the period of British paramountcy, the House of Bikaner

always stood as an ally in support of the British empire whenever necessity arose. In the first Afghan War (1838-42), camels were supplied for the Kabul expedition and the Bikaner troops had seen active service during the first Sikh War of 1845-46 on which occasion, guns and ammunition were supplied as also assistance given in securing safe transport of supplies as well as in hunting down freebooters. During the second Sikh War (1848-49), a body of horse and artillery was sent to cooperate with the British troops at Ferozepore and camels were supplied for the use of the British army. The traditional military prowess of Bikaner was demonstrated in the suppressing of the Mutiny(1857) by rescuing and affording refuge to innocent relatives and supplying the wants of and assisting actively the British operations in Hansi and Hissar. In the second Afghan War of 1878-79, an offer was made placing the services of the entire army of the State at the disposal of the British Government but though availing of the offer was not deemed necessary, eight hundred camels were supplied for the use of the British army. The Bikaner forces, under the personal command of Maharaja Ganga Singh, took active part in the China War (1900-01) and were mentioned in despatches. During the Somaliland campaign (1902-04), the Ganga Risala (Bikaner Camel Corps) saw active service and took part in fighting on several occasions. The services of the Bikaner State forces in the Great War (1914-18) are manifold and have been mentioned in brief in the main text. During the third Afghan War (1919) also, Maharaja Ganga Singh made an offer of his personal services as well as those of the Bikaner State forces, but they were not availed of. On the outbreak of World War II, Maharaja Ganga Singh offered his personal services so also Maharaja Sadul Singh (then heir-apparent). Maharaja Ganga Singh also proceeded on a tour of the Middle East accompanied by the author. The Bikaner troops saw active service in Burma, Aden and the Middle East.

During the period of five centuries, twenty-two rulers ruled over Bikaner. Out of them, eighteen took part directly

in various wars, campaigns or internal military operations. This proves beyond any doubt that the relationship which the House of Bikaner had built with the rulers of Delhi, was intimate and extremely important. The main aim of this investigation and research thus has been to examine critically the factors which vindicated the necessity of such a relationship and pushed it on. Special efforts have been made to go deep into the motives of the contracting parties and evaluate objectively the various vicissitudes disturbing its continuity.

The works available on the subject were written from different points of view, with the result that only a casual notice has been taken of the relationship which had, during the course of these five hundred years, been built between the rulers of Bikaner and those of Delhi. Even the casual reference with regard to this relationship is so scattered that a great effort has to be made to put it together with a view to offering a well-knit and compact story. At places, facts have to be re-interpreted in an entirely different light keeping in view the political and military fluctuations. What Dr. Ojha has offered is only a chronological arrangement of events as they took place, without hypothesis or interpretation. An attempt has, therefore, to be made not only to prepare a connected narrative but to interpret the relationship at every stage and to explain the consequences on a scientific basis. As for example, it has been illustrated as to how the arid zone of Bikaner and its deserted plains could attract the attention of imperial Mughals by analysing the geographical, political, social, strategic and commercial features of the area. Similarly, a rational analysis of the circumstances forcing the rulers of Bikaner to seek the assistance of the rulers of Delhi and inducing them to form an alliance with the Rathores of Bikaner, has been attempted.

The factors responsible for bringing Raja Rai Singh into the limelight and later on throwing him out of Mughal favour, have been re-interpreted. The unprecedented rise and supremacy of the House of Bikaner during the early period of Jahangir's reign requires an entirely new approach so that Jahangir's

eagerness to solicit Rai Singh's support may be better understood. The changes that frequently took place in the attitude of the imperial Mughals towards the House of Bikaner have been explained, by attempting an evaluation of the motives which created occasions for a change in the established policy. The reasons for Aurangzeb's attitude of hostility towards Maharaja Karan Singh and then towards Maharaja Anup Singh have been given in full.

An entirely new approach has been made to explain the eagerness of Maharaja Surat Singh to seek the assistance of the British. An attempt has also been made to reveal the mischievous inclination of the British to interpret the terms of the treaty of perpetual friendship, alliance and unity of interests (1818), to their own advantage, bringing the ruler of Bikaner to greater subservience. Hitherto, there has been a tendency to interpret the treaty with a view to humouring or misguiding the princes of India.

The British efforts to interfere in the internal administration of Bikaner have now been interpreted in an objective manner of showing the gradual encroachment of the British into the functions of the internal administration of the State. It is in this particular field that a new light has been thrown on a facet hitherto not properly appreciated by the public. The new materials incorporated in the thesis with regard to the impact of the British with the administration of Bikaner and the resistance offered by Maharaja Ganga Singh to check this tendency and revise the political practice, have been unearthed from the records available in the Lallgarh Palace and the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner. The entire relationship of Maharaja Ganga Singh with the Government of India has been narrated for the first time in its true perspective.

The thesis thus covers attempts which may be classified under three separate groups. In the first place, it strives to ascertain the relations of Bikaner with Delhi from a study of a wide variety of records and publications and putting them in sequence so as to offer a continuous story of events. In the

second place, the facts of history have been re-interpreted to enquire into the causes and consequences of the major events. In the third place, some facts, hitherto unknown, have been collected from old documents and new light has been thrown on facets of history of Bikaner. These are some of the points which constitute originality in the thesis. Throughout the thesis emphasis has been laid on Bikaner's relations with the Central Powers and details of the internal history of Bikaner have as far as possible, been avoided.

The present author has been fortunate to have in his own possession the collection of material in the Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office files containing the correspondence exchanged between the rulers of Bikaner and the British authorities. It has also been possible for him to use the material which the princely State of Bikaner had collected to bring out the official publication entitled "The House of Bikaner". Besides, the famous Anup Sanskrit Library in the Lallgarh Palace has been available to the author. Here the best transcribed Persian and Rajasthani manuscripts pertaining to the History of Bikaner are found. The collections of in the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner, have been extremely useful to the author. In this connection the author wishes to express his grateful thanks to Shri Nathu Ram Khadgawat, Director of Archives, Government of Rajasthan, Bikaner, for the facilities extended to him. One very important contribution which the author has been able to make is the discovery of many documents which had hitherto been lying in the Bada Karkhana and Toshakhana. These documents include hundreds of Bahis, Kharitas, Khatoot Ahalkaran, Vakil Reports, Khatoot Maharajgan and Zanani Tahrir. During the course of investigation the author came across the original Farmans, Nishans, and Manshurs addressed by the imperial Mughals to the rulers of Bikaner and many of which are in the author's personal possession.

In addition to the above mentioned sources, the author had also to consult various libraries situated at Bombay, Bikaner, Delhi and Jodhpur. The author while on a visit to

London, took the opportunity to consult some books at the British Museum Library. The field of research in original unpublished sources is confined to the later period of Bikaner History. The earlier period is largely based on published sources, literature and traditions. It is for the first time that anything is written on the history of Bikaner after 1937.

With a view to interpreting more recent facts of history, the old and retired employees who had worked with Maharaja Ganga Singh had to be consulted frequently. Amongst them, the name of Kanwar Jaswant Singh of Daudsar who had been the Private Secretary to Maharaja Ganga Singh and closely associated with the Maharaja's work at the Round Table Conference in England, deserves special mention. He was later also Prime Minister of Bikaner State during the period of Maharaja Sadul Singh. The oral evidence given by these gentlemen and their informed opinions were of invaluable help in reconstructing the history of the twentieth century.

The material pertaining to the period of the last two Maharajas are so vast and varied that it was humanly impossible to incorporate all of them in a brief survey of relationship like this. An attempt may, however, be made by the author separately to work extensively on those materials as and when an opportunity offers.

With regard to the Anglo-Bikaner relationship the author claims to have discovered new facts particularly of the reigns of Dungar Singh, Ganga Singh and Sadul Singh. The history of the more recent period has been written for the first time. The original contribution thus made by the author reveals the methods adopted by the British to hoodwink the Indian princes and increase thereby their sphere of intervention. This will undoubtedly assist the students of history to understand the nature of British paramountcy in a much better way.

Another direction towards which an effort has been made to reveal the truth, concerns the attitude of the British towards the Jagirdar rebels in Indian States. It is in this

particular sphere that the British followed their policy of divide and rule very vigorously and intensified their intervening activities as and when the feudal lords raised a dissenting cry. The role of Ganga Singh in the imperial and the British Indian politics brings out in bold relief the genuine desire of the princes to facilitate the liberation of the country and also their apprehensions with regard to the impending change. A study of this thesis would reveal to the reader that the Princely Order had their own to hold against the Paramount Power and that they too put up a strong resistance against British highhandedness. The last but not the least important contribution has been made towards bringing to light the part played by the later two rulers, Maharaja Ganga Singh and Maharaja Sadul Singh in the understanding of India's aspirations for political freedom and their part in the freedom struggle.

Research work on the thesis was originally started under the guidance of the late Fr. Heras, and after suspension of studies for some time, it was continued under the guidance of Professor William Coelho of the Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture, St. Xavier's College, Bombay. The thesis is prepared for submission to the University of Bombay for the Ph.D. Degree.

The thanks of the author are due to his guides and the authorities in-charge of the Archives and Libraries mentioned in this preface.

Kami Singh

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INTRODUCTION

The area which now comprises the three districts of Bikaner, Churu and Ganganagar, had been known prior to April 1949, as the Rathore principality of Bikaner. It was situated between 27°- 12' & 30°- 12'North Latitudes and 72°-12' & 75°- 41' East Longitudes and was bounded on the north and west by the Bhawalpur State; on the south-west by the Jaisalmer State; on the south by the Jodhpur State; on the south-east by the Jaipur State; on the east by the Loharu State and the Hissar District and on the north-east by the Ferozepore District.[1] It had an area of 23,317 square miles and was the sixth largest State[2] of all the Indian States and the second largest in Rajputana.[3] The northern part of the area consists of level loam land and, besides the 6,20,000 acres of land already covered by the Gang Canal, is sufficiently fertile to produce both the Rabi and Kharif crops in years of rainfall and would soon be converted into a region of agricultural

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1. The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. VIII, p.202
   Erskine; Gazetteer of the Bikaner State, p.309
   A Brief History of Bikaner and its rulers, p.5
   Capt. Powlett in his Gazetteer of the Bikaner State (p.91), however, gives the latitudes as 27°-30'& 29°-55' and longitudes as 72°-30' & 75°-40' and the area as 23,500 sq. miles, which are obviously incorrect.
2. The six largest States in respect of area were -

i.	Jammu & Kashmir	85885 sq. miles
ii.	Hyderabad	82698 sq. miles
iii.	Jodhpur	35066 sq. miles
iv.	Mysore	29475 sq. miles
v.	Gwalior	26367 sq. miles
vi.	Bikaner	23317 sq. miles

3. Amongst the States of Rajputana, Jodhpur was the only State having a larger area viz. 35066 sq. miles.

possibilities by the Rajasthan Canal.[1] The remaining portion is mostly sandy and undulating; the south-western part lies within the great Indian desert and in the south-east there is a small range of rocky hills.[2]

These physical features divide the area into two distinct natural divisions separated by the bed of the Ghaggar, the central and the southern portions being known as the Dhora and the north as Baggi. A part of the Baggi area has since acquired distinctive features owing to the development of the Canal colony and this has come to be known as Nehri as distinct from Baggi. The area known as Dhora can be further divided into two parts: (i) Magra - mostly stony but level and fairly productive under good rainfall; and (ii) Thali - mostly covered by sand dunes.[3]

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1. A Brief History of Bikaner and its Rulers, pp.5 & 6
   The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. VIII, pp.202-203
   Census Report 1943, Bikaner State, Vol. I, p.2

   It was Maharaja Ganga Singh who had got the entire area surveyed. On the basis of the survey conducted by Sir Aurel Stein and Mr. G.D. Rudkin, a specific plan for bringing the area other than the Gang Canal Colony under irrigation, had been prepared. Maharaja Sadul Singh left behind a fairly large balance to be spent over the implementation of these irrigational projects. It was, however, the Government of Rajasthan which could implement the scheme. The Rajasthan Feeder was opened in October, 1960, its culturable commanded area being 1,26,654 acres. The Rajasthan Canal started irrigating in April, 1961, the area of its operation being 3,23,677 acres. Its direct distributories cover an area of 2,21,00,63 acres, the entire low level being 5,210,059 acres and the total area commanded by the Rajasthan Canal comes to 11,93,491 acres.

2. A Brief History of Bikaner and its Rulers, p.6
   Erskine Op.cit. p.309

3. Census Report 1943, Bikaner State, Vol. I, p.3

Rainfall is scanty, its average being about ten inches.[1] A considerable portion of the total area of the region is barren and sparsely populated which even has a tendency to migrate to neighbouring more fertile tracts during the years of famine and scarcity.[2]

There are no rivers and the area has only two fresh water lakelets which are formed from drainage from the rocky country in the south west of Bikaner. Inspite of only slight difference in level in the region, water is found at very varying depths and most of the city wells are more than three hundred feet deep.[3] The water is, however, of

1. Census Report 1943, Bikaner State, Vol. I, p.7
   The average rainfall as noted in the Administration Reports of the Bikaner State for the following years was as noted against each:-
   1920-21 6.99 inches
   1930-31 10.79 inches
   1940-41 10.26 inches

2. A Brief History of Bikaner and its Rulers, p.6
   The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. VIII (p.213) mentions that 22% of the population emigrated during the famine of 1899.

3. Powlett Op.cit. pp. 93, and 149. Powlett quotes in this connection the observations of Dr. Moore who found a well at Nokha which was four hundred feet deep. He also quotes Dr. Moore on the geology who says "Water at Bikaner is only obtainable three or four hundred feet from the surface. I investigated the material brought up from a well where water had first been obtained at the depth of three hundred and sixteen feet.... The strata passed through was first a mass of 'kankar', then, a mass of red clay, thirdly sandstone, and lastly, white gritty sand or gravel, the latter consisting of white stones from the size of a pea to that of an egg, composed of quartz, and although not round, yet with surfaces and angles so smooth as to give rise to the idea that they must at some time have been exposed to the action of running water. Carter, the geologist, has, I believe, expressed the opinion, that the whole of this semi-desert portion of western India did at some time form the bed of an ocean extending from the present shores of the sea to the line of the Arivalli Range, and the geological characteristics shown to exist by the deep wells of Bikaner would seem to support this opinion."
   Mr. George Thomas in his Military Memoirs says, "The country is elevated; the soil a light brown sand, from the nature of which rain is swallowed up as soon as fallen. This

excellent quality.[1] The greater part of the territory is plain and interspersed with shifting sand dunes, the furrowed slopes of which suggest the sea-shore.[2]

Lime, Red sandstone of an excellent quality, fuller's earth, gypsum, copper, etc. are found in different parts of the area.[3] Though the country is dreary and desolate, it abounds in grass and jungle bushes, fog and sajji. Bhurut is the commonest grass in the southern half of the area; others being dhaman, makra, gantheel, phuler etc.[4]

As a result of its topography, physical features, climate and other geographical phenomena, the life of the people residing in the area around Bikaner had been affected

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circumstance renders necessary a recourse to the construction of wells in all parts of the country. These, which are made of brick, are in general from one to two hundred feet in depth, though towards the Jaisalmer frontier they extend to no less than three hundred feet."

The depth of water in the northern part of the State had been slightly different, the following being the average depths of spring level:-

Mirzawala Tehsil	... 125 ft.
Anupgarh Tehsil	... 135 ft.
Hanumangarh Tehsil	... 180 ft.
Suratgarh Tehsil	... 160 ft.
Tibi Tehsil	... 150 ft.

Thus the average depth for the whole tract may be put at over 150 ft. There are a great many wells from 180 to 200 feet deep and about 80% give only brackish water, unfit for human or animal consumption. The depths of the wells vary from 150 to 450 feet and out of the 3,684 wells which had been constructed in the State villages for drinking purposes, the water of 40% was undrinkable due to brackishness. Whilst many more are on the border line of good and bad and turn brackish at the commencement of certain season.

1. Powlett, Op.cit. p.93
2. Erskine, op.cit p.309
   The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol.VIII, p.203
   Tod, Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, Vol.II,pp.1152-53
   Dr. Moore as quoted by Powlett, Op.cit, p. 149.
3. Powlett, Op.cit.pp. 92-93
   Tod, Op.cit, Vol.II, p.1154
   The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol.VIII, p.211
   A.C. Banerjee; The Rajput States and the East India Company, p. 183.
4. A.C.Banerjee

to so great an extent as to determine even the course of its history. The entire area in the northwest except a small tract consists of high and shifting sand dunes. The configurations of levels are such as make any penetration through the desert almost impossible. Upto Suratgarh the country is desolate with ridges of sand practically covered with jungle shrubs and though therefrom a flat alluvial plain extends having better vegetation and more frequent villages, the entire area was a waste land and the haunt of robbers and outlaws. The nature of the soil is such that it swallows up the entire rain as soon as it falls and this necessitates the construction of very deep wells. Even for ordinary purposes of life and domestic consumption all possible efforts are made for the reception of rain water in cisterns. Dearth of water frequently compelled the inhabitants in the past to migrate to a more fertile soil with entire families[1]. Dearth of water, inadequacy of rains

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Powlett, Op.cit. pp. 94-95
The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol.VIII, p.204

1. George Thomas says in his Military Memoirs that " for the ordinary purposes of life, and domestic consumption, each family is careful to provide a cistern for the reception of rain water; as a result, of this precious article frequently compels the inhabitants, by whole families, to migrate to a more favourable soil."*

All hopes of relieving the struggling population from the hardships of recurring famines are centred in the level tract of north including the Ghaggar bed which measures 3300 sq. miles and is commanded by the Sutlej. Even this area at the beginning of the nineteenth century was all waste land and served only as haunt of robbers and outlaws. No villages existed at all upto sixty years ago. The Bhattis of Raniah plundered the whole of its northern region and that led to its desertion. The number of cattle and sheep fluctuated very much from year to year according to sufficiency of fodder and water. A glance on the following figures would substantiate the fact:-

Year	Sheep & goats	Bullocks, cows, buffalos etc.
1896	249294	225741
1898	338763	135995

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and absence of rivers have forced the people to depend upon their neighbours for the necessary supplies of

Year	Sheep & goats	Bullocks, cows, buffalos etc.
1899	163328	38766
1900	141187	51515
1904	296628	48875
1908	457514	109519
1912	235695	181841

At times not less than 75% of the cattle have had to be moved out of the tract owing to the scarcity of water and lack of fodder. The administration had to face after each bad year, the difficulty in supporting the people with sufficiency of cattle to plough their lands. Even the hardy camels which want little to drink, and eat the coursest vegetation are obliged to migrate in the dry years. Vide his letter No: 1590, dated 22.9.1899, the Political Agent Bikaner, wrote to the Darbar that a very great inconvenience had been caused to the Government of the Punjab by the excessive emigration from Bikaner and suggested that some check might be placed on the emigrants and the earthwork of Bikaner-Bhatinda railway line should be taken up. Again vide his letter No: 1920 dated 30.9.1899 the Political Agent observed that complaints had constantly been reaching the Agent to the Governor-General of emigrants from Rajputana crowding on the relief works in British districts and transfrontier States. Again his letter No: 918 dated 28.3.1900 required the Darbar to remove such people from the Punjab to their respective villages. The final settlement report of the Sirsa and Fazilka Tehsils by C.M.Ken indicates that the people of Fazilka were able to support thousands of their kinsmen from Bikaner and Sirsa. In the year 1911 also the Lt. Governor of the Punjab wrote to the Agent to the Governor-General, Rajputana States that men from Rajputana had already commenced to go to the Punjab as usual. During the famine of 1899-1900, not less than three lacs of people left Bikaner to swell the number of starving inhabitants of the adjacent British districts and States and the population of the State at the Census of 1901 was only 5,84,627 as against 8,21,965 in 1891.

(Taken from extract in Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner).

provision. Even the selected areas, found slightly more favourable for cultivation, produce so little that it hardly compensates the labour of the farmer. This obviously induces the people to prefer pastoral occupation to cultivation.[1] As such the Rathore principality of Bikaner offered so unhospitable a region that only a few outsiders dared penetrate the sand dunes and disturb the peace of the area.[2] This offered a very great security to the area from external attacks and allowed the rulers of Bikaner to shape the destiny of their principality independently. It meant an autonomy well suited for the growth of an

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1. Powlett, Op.cit, p.135.
   The Imperial Gazetteer of India, Vol. VIII, p.210

   The total rainfall in 1899 was 1.65 inches in the western portion and 2.21 inches in the eastern portion. The uncertainty of the rainfall is very great and it is usually most capricious, wide-spread and well-distributed rain occurring but seldom. Irrigation from wells is impossible and cultivation depends entirely on the uncertain and scanty rainfall. Cropping is really even more uncertain. People have therefore, to take recourse to rearing of cattle and sheep.

2. The Bikaner State remained immune from attacks from outside. The only persons who invaded Bikaner from the northern side were either the lawless Bhattis of Bhawalpur or Raniah. Organised raids were administered twice: once by Mirza Kamran and again by George Thomas. Both these expeditions failed to create any impression and ended in failure. Neither the Marathas, nor the Pindaris ever disturbed the peace. It was, however, only from the south that the parent State of Jodhpur invaded the area and on one occasion in the reign of Maldeo, Bikaner had actually been occupied by the Jodhpur troops. With the exception of these expeditions, Bikaner remained safe and its physical features came to its rescue usually.

indigenous culture and undisturbed harmony.[1]

In view of the obstruction offered by the physical features and the climate of the State of Bikaner, outsiders might never have felt tempted to come to the area and the history of Bikaner might have passed mostly as a record of uneventful events confined usually to issues of local importance alone. But there had been other factors which made this unattractive piece of land fairly important so as to evolve a chain of events preparing a way, though difficult, towards the eventual dawn of a diplomatic relationship between the rulers of this principality and the emperors of Delhi.

It was in fact the close proximity of this area to the kingdom of Delhi[2] which made it obligatory on the part of the rulers of Delhi not to under-rate the strategic importance of a principality situated so close to their vicinity. The strategic importance became all the more preponderating because of the two impregnable forts of

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1. The sense of security provided to the people residing in the area had primarilty been responsible for the prosperity of Seths, Sahukars and other mercantile communities though in every other respect the waste lands of Bikaner offered practically no opportunities for any prosperity to flourish. The Seths and Sahukars of Bikaner who conducted trade on an all India basis and resided mostly outside the State in distant places like Bombay and Calcutta, kept their wealth hoarded in Bikaner primarily because of the security provided by the physical features. Again, the security provided by nature induced literary people to shift their manuscripts to this area and that explains the presence of millions of manuscripts even today in the Bikaner State. The famous Jagadguru collection is available even today in the Anup Sanskrit Library, Bikaner.

2. The distance between Delhi and the border of the Bikaner State is only about 117 miles and from Bhatner (Hanumangarh) 196 miles.

Erskine, Op.cit, p.357.

Bhatinda and Bhatner[1] being situated on the northern boundary of the State. No military power could claim to occupy the East Punjab without establishing its hold over these two forts.[2]

It was thus the ringfence which the Rathore principality claimed to create around Bhatner and Bhatinda which induced the rulers of Delhi to retain some sort of hold over it and out of this anxiety arose the relationship between the rulers of Bikaner and the emperors of Delhi. Their urge to set up a counter-force against the Afghans led the imperial Mughals to seek the cooperation of the Rathores of Bikaner in their efforts to consolidate their Empire.[3] The foundations of the Mughal empire could thus be laid in

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1. Erskine, Op. Cit., 397. Bhatner was the old name for Hanumangarh which became to be so called as it was captured on a Tuesday in 1805 by Maharaja Surat Singh. It came to be known as Bhatner because of its originally being occupied by the Bhattis -the Musalman Bhattis. Bhatner was a strong and well-fortified place renowned throughout the whole of Hindustan.
2. Almost all the invaders coming from northwest made it a point to occupy the area near about Sirsa also known as Saraswati. It has figured very prominently in connection with the raids of Sultan Mohammad Gauri and his lieutenants. Saraswati, which has been mentioned in Tabqat-i-Nasiri as a fort, was in fact the neighbourhood of the river Saraswati, also called Ghaggar. It was in the close vicinity of this area that the forts of Bhatner and Bhatinda were situated. Its strategic importance consists in the fact that having conquered this portion, every invader tried to transform it into a base for his operations towards Delhi.
3. All the efforts of Babar taken together could only wound the Afghan snake with the result that Humayun lost his throne and Sher Shah could set up an Afghan empire in India. Even after Akbar had defeated Hemu in the second battle of Panipat, the Afghan danger cast its blasting shadows over the destinies of the Mughal empire so much so that the Mughal emperors had been forced to seek the cooperation of the Rajputs against them.

granite only with the assistance of the Rajput warriors.[1]

Another factor which lent importance to the principality of Bikaner was that the people living in this area, having been groomed in the training school of the Yaudheyas, possessed warlike traits and the region, therefore, offered a good recruiting ground for the imperial army of Delhi. Not only this but also the martial races inhabiting this region could become a source of danger and disturb the peace and tranquility of the Punjab. Moreover, the route for the pilgrims proceeding to 'Haj' lay also through this region.

It was certainly not the desire of the rulers of Delhi alone which prompted their relationship with the house of Bikaner, but also the need of the rulers of Bikaner. Bikaner though not open to external danger, had, however, been a victim of internal anarchy[2] arising mostly

1. Soon after Akbar became emperor, he realised the imminent danger from the Afghans as also the fact that he could not meet same successfully without the cooperation and assistance of the rulers of Rajasthan. He, therefore, adopted the policy of playing them off against one another. He secured the friendship of the Kachhwahas by an alliance with Bharmal in 1562. This led to a split among the Rajput rulers of Rajasthan so much so that they fought against one another, at Merta in 1562, Jodhpur in 1563, Chittor from 1567-1568, Ranthambore in 1569 and again at Kalinja in the same year for the expansion of Akbar's dominions. His diplomacy was so successful that in 1570, when he visited Nagor, the Rajput Princes vied with one another in acknowledging his supremacy and seeking his favour.

2. The expansionist policy of Rao Bika and his successors had naturally caused enough of resentment among the earlier settlers. The most important of these were the Bhatis in the northwest and the Bhattis of Bhatner. When Rao Bika intended to construct a fort at Kodamdesar, the Bhatis opposed the idea and ultimately even took recourse to fighting. It was because of the possibility of a continued opposition from them that Rao Bika ultimately decided to construct a fort at Bikaner. The Bhattis which were Muslim converts from Bhatis and who held sway over Bhatner and the neighbouring area, were also subjugated by Rao Bika but this territory changed hands several times and it was only in the reign of Surat Singh that they were finally subdued.
Another reason for this type of anarchy had been

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out of the lawless activities of the Bhattis[1], Johiyas[2] and other indigenous elements[3] of the population residing in the area. The conquest by Bika of the area and subjugation of the republican groups[4] that had been formed there through a process of amalgamation and which were holding sway over their respective territories, naturally led to their raising a hue and cry and engaging in nefarious activities whenever an opportunity offered itself and thus disturbing the peace and making it impracticable to carry on the administration

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the weak rule of some of the successors of Rao Bika as also their short-sighted policy, raising of taxes, unscrupulous bestowal of jagirs and their resumption later, etc., which created dissatisfaction among their own jagirdars who, in some cases, even went to the extent of hatching conspiracies and rising in open revolt against the authority of the ruler.

To add to this were the usual court intrigues and the desire of the officials to grind their axes even at the expense of the ruler and the public.

1. The entire area to the north-west of Bikaner extending from Jaisalmer to the borders of the Punjab was, before the founding of Bikaner, under the sway of the Bhatis. These were divided into two: the Hindu Bhatis occupying territories near Jaisalmer and in the Pugal tract and the Muslim Bhatis occupying territories in the north near Bhatner. These Muslim Bhatis were known as Bhattis.
2. See page
3. These other indigenous elements were the jagirdars of whom the Thakurs of Ajitpura, Churu and Bhadra were the principal ones.
4. These republican groups were mainly of the Jats composed of the following clans:-
   1. Godaras
   2. Sarans
   3. Kaswas
   4. Beniwals
   5. Puniahs
   6. Sihagas
   7. Soduans.

smoothly in the area. It was to fight against these forces of disorder operating within the territories that the Bikaner rulers had to seek outside assistance. Far more disastrous than the internal disorder proved the ambitious designs of the parent State of Jodhpur whose rulers led numerous expeditions against Bikaner forcing its ruler Rao Kalyanmal to seek assistance from Sher Shah.[1]

It was thus the internecine wars with the parent State of Jodhpur, the internal anarchy and the troubles created by the Bhattis and lawless bandits on the borders that made the rulers of Bikaner seek and establish relationship with the emperors of Delhi, which was further facilitated and strengthened by Akbar's policy towards the Hindus.[2]

Apart from the strategic importance arising out of its close proximity to Delhi, the Bikaner State had a commercial importance as well. Rajgarh was a great commercial mart and a point of rendezvous for caravans from all parts of northern India. The produce of the Punjab and Kashmir came formerly direct through Hansi and Hissar, that from the eastern parts and consisting of silk, fine cloth, indigo, sugar, iron, tobacco etc. through Delhi, Rewari, Dadri etc; from Haroti and Malwa side came opium which was

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1. Two invasions had been made by Jodhpur against Bikaner by the time of the reign of Rao Kalyanmal, and five more invasions were made thereafter during the reigns of Sujan Singh, Zorawar Singh and Gaj Singh.

2. Smith; The Oxford History of India, pp.369-370
Akbar's Hindu policy was that of toleration, allowing equal freedom to practise their own religion. He abolished the Jazia and did not differentiate between Hindus and Mohammadans in the matter of appointments or grant of mansabs. Though there are some who hold the view that this policy of his was the outcome of political expediency, there is however no evidence to support the contention. On the contrary, we have the authority of Abul Fazal that Akbar's entire life was that of search for truth and he sincerely believed that there was truth in every religion.

supplied to all the Rajputana States, and from Multan and Shikarpur, the great commercial marts of the Sindh Valley came dates, wheat, rice, loongees (silk vestments for women), and fruits and from Pali in Marwar, the imports from maritime countries such as spices, drugs and coconuts.[1]

Though much of this trade was the result of the needs of the local people, a greater part of it was transit trade, and yielded considerable revenue. Woollens were a staple commodity both for trade and manufacture. The residents of the area were also good at iron-smithy and had shops at the capital towns as well as other large towns where sword blades of a very high quality, match-locks, daggers, iron-laces etc., were manufactured. The sword blades were in great demand and were exported to different parts of India.[2]

The principal trade routes connecting the area with the north were from Delhi, in Bhiwani and Hissar to Rajgarh in Bikaner. From Rajgarh there were three main routes: one to Bikaner via Reni, another via Churu, Ratangarh and Sujangarh to Phalodi, Nagor, Jodhpur and Pali and the third to Bhawalpur via Pugal. There were other alternate routes also and the preference of the traders to use one route or the other depended on terms imposed upon them for the transit of their goods. For example, the traders preferred the Bikaner route to the Shekhawati route between Bhiwani and Marwar because on the latter route customs duty was exacted by many Thakurs whereas on the former route it was taken once

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1. A.C.Banerjee, Op.cit, pp.183-84.
   Tod, Op.cit, Vol.II, Pp.1154-55.
   Erskine, Op.cit., pp. 351-352.

2. A.C.Banerjee, Op.cit, p.184
   Tod, Op.cit. Vol.II, p.1155
   Erskine, Op.cit., p.352

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for all at Rajgarh.[1] Further, this area was also connected by trade routes to other places though these routes have since fallen into oblivion by Jaisalmer ceasing to function as a trade centre. The various routes were covered in several stages which were the halts for the caravans and their distances varied from three to twenty miles depending upon the facilities of water, food and fodder etc. The route from Rajgarh to Hyderabad in Sindh via Umarkot was, for instance, covered in twenty-six stages. This commercial significance of the area also made it too tempting a principality to be ignored both by the Afghan and the Mughal rulers of Delhi.

The relationship which this area built up with the rest of the country in general and the Central Powers in particular, did not remain confined to the Mughal and the British rulers of Delhi. Even prior to the advent of the Muslims, the strategic importance of the area had been clearly manifested through the significant role which its citizens played in the politics of the day. The history of this area can be traced back to the earliest period of Indian history and during the protohistoric period the Saraswati Valley which lies in this region represented the eastern outpost of Harappan culture. It is now believed that "if Harappa and Mohanjo Daro were the two capitals of the Harappan empire, one in the north and the other in the south, Kalibanga in the Ganganagar District was the third capital in the east."[2]

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1. Powlett, Op.cit. pp. 157-58, Appendix I -Notes, on Bikaner Customs and Trade compiled from Capt. Burton's report for 1872-73.

   The distances of the principal routes are given by Powlett, Op.cit. pp.108-09 as under:-

Bikaner to Ajmer	....150 miles.
Bikaner to Bhawalpur	....150 miles.
Bikaner to Bhiwani	....180 miles.
Bikaner to Sirsa	....160 miles.

2. Dr. Dashrath Sharma; Rajasthan through the Ages, Introduction, pp. i-v.

In the age of Mahabharata, this area was a portion of the Kuru Rajya.[1] It is very difficult to say who was ruling in the area during the periods of the Maurya, Greek, Gupta and Pratihar supremacy but the glory of Bikaner during the Maurya, Sunga and Kusan periods can be proved from literary and epigraphic evidences. The area was once occupied by the Jaudheyas who not only won back their own freedom but also that of the rest of India by fighting successfully against the Sakas and the Kusanas. Dr. Tessitori thought that the

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1. The old name of the territories which went to constitute the Rathore principality of Bikaner, had been 'Jangal Desh'. Towards its north lay Kuru and Madra and that is why the word 'Jangal' occurs in Mahabharata at times all alone and at times along with Kuru and Madra. We will come across in Mahabharata, Kurupanchal Madreya Jangla (कुरुपांचालाः मद्रेयजांगलाः) and Kuru Jangla (कुरुजांगलाः) which means Panchal linked with Kuru and Jangal linked with Madra. In this connection the following couplets from Mahabharata will substantiate the fact:-

कच्छा गोपाल कक्षाश्च जांङ्गलाः कुरुवर्णिकाः ॥

Mahabharata, Bhishm Parv, Chapter 9,shloka 56

तत्रेमे कुरुपाञ्चालाः शाल्वा मात्स्याः जाङ्गलाः ॥

Mahabharata, Bhishm Parv, Chapter 9 shloka 39

तीर्थयात्रामनुक्रामन्प्राप्तोस्मि कुरुजांगलान् ॥

Mahabharata, Van Parv, Chapter 10, Shloka 11

early mounds in the Ghaggar belt can be connected with the Jaudheyas[1];but now many of them have been found to have a much earlier history. Budhist vestiges have been found in the region of Suratgarh, Rang Mahal and Badopal; terracottas indicating a flourishing civilisation and resembling the Indo-Greek ones in its exterior aspects and Saiva and Vaishnava in its religious traditions, have been unearthed in the locality. During the Gupta period the area assimilated all that was best in the Gupta culture and made a significant contribution to art, literature and science. Their artists, imbued with classical traditions, produced sculptures of rare beauty even after the Gupta period. The

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1. Dr. Gaurishankar Hirachand Ojha, Bikaner Rajya ka Itihas, Vol. I, pp.69-70.

   Also see Dr. Dashrath Sharma's article "Rajasthan men Ganarajyon ka yug" published in Marubharati(from Pilani); and also his article on Rajasthan's culture in Rajasthan: A Symposium.

   " They Yaudheyas who had their republic in the Saraswati Valley were probably the strongest of the republican tribes of Rajasthan, western Uttar Pradesh and south-east Punjab. In Jain Kathas, Rohitaka is mentioned as the capital of the Yaudheyas, but they might have had more than one branch and more than one capital. The tract called the Johiya Bar which lies on both the banks of Sutlej and borders the old Bhawalpur State is still known as the Johiya Bar or the land of Johiyas or Yaudheyas. In the second century A.D. the Yaudheyas came into conflict with the powerful Saka ruler Rudardaman who, though he defeated them, could not forbear speaking of them as untenable on account of their pride resulting from the description of the title of hero to them amongst all Kshatriyas. The same idea found expression also in one of their clay seals from Ludhiana which bears the legend, "Yaudheyanam Jayamantra dharnam" i.e. the seal of the Yaudheyas who were in the possession of the victory charm. Only a series of victories could have made them so boastful and so confident. War was, it seems, their profession; at least Kumar, the devine commander-in-chief, was their tutelary deity and might have been considered the supreme ruler of the Yaudheyas State. In Jain Kathas Chandamari is mentioned as their tutelary deity and she is fonder of blood even more than Subrahmanya or Kumar."

   -Dr. Dashrath Sharma, Marubharati, Vol. VIII, 3, pp.3-6 and its English version in "Rajasthan through the Ages"

statue of Jain Saraswati discovered near ~~village~~ Pallu village and exhibited in the State Museum at Bikaner bears testimony to this fact.[1]

In the time of Harsha of Kanauj, we have some information on the southern part of the State. The description of the Och'ali country given by the Chinese traveller Hieun Tsang fits exactly, according to Dr. Goetz, the conditions in Bikaner.[2] Of the next century, we hardly know anything. The throne of the Rajas of Pugal,[3] said to have been brought from Ghazni and still in the possession of the Rao of Pugal, though indeed very old, could nevertheless not be older than the Ghaznavite period. The small Devi idol,[4] which is a replica and is said to have been brought from Jaisalmer about eight hundred years ago, could at most belong to the fourteenth century. The devlis of the twelfth century from Kolayat, Bhadle, Morkhana and of the thirteenth century from Rasisar, Kanwalisar and Chhapar depict a standard which is semi-barbarian. Only on the northern fringe, there is evidence of some fine Hindu and Jain sculptures and apparently these seem to have been imported from central Rajputana. It is only in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that we have an indication of renaissance on a modest scale and probably inspired from Gujerat.[5]

The old forts of Bikaji-ki-Tekri near Shri Laxminathji's temple and Pugal were small structures of sun-dry bricks. It

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1. Dr. Dashrath Sharma; Rajasthan: A Symposium, published by Public Relations Department, Government of Rajasthan. Rajasthan Bharti, Part I, Vols.2-3, July-October,1946,p.3 "Outline of an Art History of Bikaner" by Dr.H.Goetz.
2. Ibid.
3. This throne is still in the possession of the Rawal of Pugal
4. There are two idols - one big and one small -side by side in the temple.
5. Rajasthan Bharti, Part I, Vols. 2-3, July-October,1946, p.4

is also doubtful if the present images of the eighteen-armed Devi of Nagnechiji and Hirangarbha and Shri Laxminathji belong to a period earlier than the fifteenth century. Though the earliest decorated parts of the famous Kanauj throne go, in any case, beyond the time of Rao Bika, one can at the most say that some of the seat planks probably hail from Kanauj. Memorial stones of the fifteenth century at Kolayat and Kodamdesar show only "single figures, very crude, short and stiff, but with a genuine body volume which the earlier devlis still miss. Those of the end of the century reveal a considerable technical improvement" and important scenes of several figures "in vivid attitudes, though the outlines are still conventional, proportions arbitrary and the plastic treatment rather summary."[1] All these tend to establish that the area had its own cultural legacy even before the coming of the Rathores.

During the centuries preceding the advent of the Rathores, the area, later known as the principality of Bikaner, was populated and ruled by communities which constituted the indigenous element. It was divided into many parts and some of these were ruled by the Johiyas, Chauhans, Sankhlas, Parmars, Bhatis and Jats though it is difficult to trace exactly the extent of their respective territorial jurisdiction or their periods of supremacy.[2]

The Johiyas were the descendants of the famous Yaudheyas whose origin can be traced to the ancient Kshatriyas and have been so described in almost all the inscriptions. The Yaudheyas were a warrior tribe occupying an important position amongst the Kshatriyas. The word 'Yaudheya' has been derived from 'Yudh' meaning fighting. The famous Sanskrit grammarian, Panini, who lived a few centuries before the

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1. Rajasthan Bharti, Part I, Vols. 2-3, July-October, 1946, p.5
2. Ojha, Vol. I, Op.cit., p.69.

establishment of the Mauryan kingdom, has also made mention of the Yaudheya tribe in his work Ashtadhyai. The Yaudheyas originally belonged to the Punjab and the area situated on both the banks of the river Sutlej near the erstwhile State of Bhawalpur, was known as the Johiya Bar primarily because it was populated by the Johiyas and even today a large number of Johiya Rajputs are to be found inhabiting the districts of Hissar (East Punjab) and Montgomery (West Pakistan). In the ancient period these people lived as independent groups and the leader of the group was recognised the ruler or the commander-in-chief of the republic. The inscription of Rudradaman at Girinar indicates that he had annihilated a large number of the Jaudheyas who were then popularly known as the warriors. After Rudradaman, Samudra Gupta brought them under his sway. Gradually they migrated from their home in the Punjab to Rajputana. They worshipped Kumar Kartikeya, the commander-in-chief of the Hindu gods and their coins bore his six-faced effigy on one side and the name of their commander-in-chief on the other. Gradually these Johiyas became Muslims and most of the Johiyas now to be found in the Bikaner area are Musalmans. When, in the sixteenth century, Rao Bika marched towards Janglu from Marwar, he had to wage an incessant warfare against them who realising his rising power and influence subsequently acknowledged his overlordship.[1]

The Chauhans belonged to Ahichhatarpur[2] now known as

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1. Ojha, Op.cit. Vol. I, pp.69-70

2. There had been so many Ahichhatarpurs in India. Hieun Tsang describes in his book सी-यु-की the capital of north Panchal as Ahichhatarpur -Beal, Budhist Records of the Western world, Vol. I, p.200.
The capital of Jangal Desh has been named as Ahichhatarpur in Jain books -Collection of Yati Gyan Chandar Mandal, Mewar.
One Ahichhatarpur was situated in Sindh also (inscription of Bhairanmatti) (Epigraphica Indica Vol. III p.235).
Also see Bombay Gazetteer, Vol.I, part 2, p.560, foot-note 1

Nagor[1], from where they later advanced to Sambhar which subsequently became their capital. The area around Sambhar was then known as Sapaldesh. The inscriptions discovered in the Bikaner area reveal that the Chauhans had settled in the area as early as the twelfth century. In the thirteenth century, the famous Chauhan ruler Vigrah Raj IV had occupied Delhi, Hansi and Hissar. A copper coin of the Chauhan ruler, Ajairaj, and bearing the name of his queen Somal ɒevi was found near Hanumangarh in 1932. Many Chauhan coins have also been found in the Bikaner State. It is, therefore, probable that the Chauhan empire might have extended to this area.

The area near Chhapar and Dronpur was known as Mohilwati and the Mohils were only a branch of the Chauhans. Nainsi states that the Mohils defeated the indigenous Bagaria Rajputs residing in the area who had previously snatched the area around Dronpur from the descendants of Shishupal known as Dahliyas[2]. An inscription at Rasisar mentioning the death

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1. Dr. Ojha has given a reason for identifying Nagor as Ahichhatarpur, the capital of Jangal Desh. According to him Nagor is a corrupted form of Nagpur which means "the city of snakes" and the meaning of Ahichhatarpur is that " नाग है छत्र जिस नगर का ". The words "Nag" and "Ahi" both mean snake. He has quoted instance from Bhagwat and Mahabharata to prove the validity of his argument. In the second place the Bijolia inscription of Someshwar dated V.S. 1226, third dark half of Phalgun describes the ruler of Ahichhatarpur as a Chauhan -

   विप्र: श्रीवत्सगोत्रोभूदहिछत्रपुरे पुरा। सामन्तो नंतरामन्तः पूरयन्तक्ष्मे नृपस्तत:
   - Shloka 12.

   Similarly, there is a mention in the Prithviraj Vijay Mahakavya that Vasudev went for hunting and he came across a lake named Sakambhari. On the basis of this it can be proved that Ahichhatarpur was in the close vicinity of Sambhar and as such it can only be identified with Nagor.

2. Muhnot Nainsi; Muhnot Nainsi Ri Khyat, Vol.I, pp.189-96

of Vikram Singh Chauhan as Jeyashth Badi 30, V.S.1288 goes to prove that the Mohil Chauhans ruled upto Rasisar[1] near Deshnoke, though it is probable that the Sankhla (Parmars) might have at some time annexed a part of their territory as Rasisar village is said to have been founded by Sankhla Raisi. It is known for a fact that the south-eastern part of Bikaner and the pargana of Ladnu were once under the sway of the Mohils[2]. The Rathores and the Mohils were at daggers drawn primarily because Rao Jodha had brought about the death of Mohil Chauhan Ajit Singh. Many engagements were fought between the two and later when the Mohils were weakened as a result of internal dissentions, Rao Jodha invaded and occupied their entire territory, but was recaptured by them with the assistance of Sarangkhan, the Muslim commander posted at Hissar. Rao Bika subsequently attacked and defeated them and made over their territory to his brother Bida.[3]

The Sankhla Parmars have been described in an inscription of V.S.1381 as Sankh Kulas.[4] One of their branches flourished at Roon in the Jodhpur territory and they were known as Ranas. About the twelfth century, Raisi, the son of Mahipal Sankhla, settled down in the Janglu area. From an inscription dated Jeyshth Badi 30, V.S.1288 found on a Devli at the Rasisar village, it is clear that the Sankhlas actually occupied Janglu,[5] though it is possible that before

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1. Rasisar inscription of Vikram Singh's devli dated 30th dark half of Jeyshth, V.S.1288
2. Ojha, Op.cit. Vol. I, pp.70-71
3. Ibid.
   Muhnot Nainsi, Op.cit. Vol.I, pp.195-96
4. Roon inscription of 1381 V.S.
5. Rasisar inscription of V.S. 1288, 30th dark half of Jeyshth.

the occupation of Janglu by the Sankhlas, the area might have been under the sway of the Chauhans and that probably Raisi took over the area after killing Vikram Singh, the son of Lakhan Chauhan. After Raisi, his son Anakhsi became the master of Janglu and founded the Anakhsar village giving it his name. Anakhsi was succeeded by his son Khinwsi who in turn was succeeded by his son Kumarsi. Kumarsi's subsequent successors were Rajsi, Munja, Uda, Punyapal and Manakpal. Manakpal was succeeded by his son Napa during whose time the area was frequently invaded by the Bilochis and the Sankhlas became weak. Napa thereupon went to Jodhpur and stayed in the court of Rao Jodha till seeing Rao Bika intent upon carving a new kingdom, he advised him to conquer Janglu and accompanied him in the expedition and became one of Rao Bika's confidants.[1]

The north-western part of Bikaner, which ran along the entire length of the border from Jaisalmer to the Punjab, was, before the establishment of the Bikaner State, under the Bhatis who were used to carrying on brigandage, carnage and lawless plundering activities. These were divided into two groups - the Bhati Rajputs of the Pugal area adjacent to the Jaisalmer frontier and the Bhattis (Musalmans) in the area around Bhatner. At the time Rao Bika established his suzerainty over Janglu, Rao Shekha who was the Bhati chief of Pugal had been arrested by the Muslims. On Shekha's wife appealing to Rao Bika for help, he got Rao Shekha liberated whereupon Shekha's daughter was given in marriage to Rao Bika.[2]

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1. Ojha, Op.cit. Vol. I, p.71
   Nainsi, Opcit. Vol. I, pp.239-40

2. Sindhayach Dayal Das; Dayal Das Ri Khyat, Vol.II p.4
   Munshi Devi Prasad; Rao Bikaji ka Jeevan Charitra, pp.6-7
   Kaviraja Samal Das; Vir Vinod, Vol.II, p.478
   Powlett, Op. cit. pp.2-3
   Jayasom; Karamchandra Vanshotkeertankam Kavyam, Shloka 126.
   The name of Bika's wife whas been given in this manuscript as Rangadevi.

But later when Rao Bika decided upon constructing a fort at Kodamdesar, the Bhatis became alarmed and when thefr prayer to Bika to abstain from doing so went unheeded, they sought and obtained the assistance of Shekha and were engaged in a battle with Rao Bika. Realising the possibility of interminable fights with the Bhatis, Rao Bika moved onwards to Bikaner where he got a fort constructed. Ultimately Rao Shekha accepted the overlordship of Rao Bika and Pugal became a jagir under the Rathore principality of Bikaner.[1] Bika had also to engage in fights against the Bhattis of Bhatner which, owing to its close proximity to Delhi, frequently changed hands and it was only after the downfall of the Mughal Empire that it finally came under the sway of the Bikaner rulers.

Around Bikaner, there were a large number of Jat settlements which enjoyed complete freedom because the central authority never cared to interfere with them. The Jats were divided into various sub-castes and each had a settlement of its own. They, however, frequently quarrelled amongst themselves[2], and it was owing to Rao Bika's taking sides with the Godaras against the Sarans and defeating Pula and the Jats ultimately accepting his overlordship, that Rao Bika could ultimately consolidate his conquests.[3]

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol.II, pp. 5-6
   Munshi Devi Prasad, Rao Bikaji ka Jeevan Charitra, pp.8-10
   Powlett, Op.cit, p.3
   Nainsi mentions that when the fort of Bikaner was completed, Kalikaran, a younger son of the ruler of Jaisalmer invaded Bikaner and was killed during the siege operations. This statement of Nainsi does not appear to be correct because Kalikaran was killed in an earlier engagement.
2. According to Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol.II, p.7, the following seven areas were under the jats:-
   1. Ladhria and Shekhsar under Godara Pandu;
   2. Bhangar under Saran Pula;
   3. Sidhmukh under Kanwar Pal;
   4. Raisalana under Beniwal Raisal;
   5. Loondhi under Piniya Kahna;
   6. Sunyee under Sihagan Chokha; and
   7. Dhansi under Sohuwa Amra.
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol.II, pp.7-11
   Nainsi, Op.cit. Vol.II, pp.201-03
   Devi Prasad, Rao Bikaji ka Jeevan Charitra, pp.11-18
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp.4-6
   Bithu Suja, Rao Jaitsi Ro Chhand, Chhand No.42

BIKANER STATE

AT THE TIME OF INTEGRATION

REFERENCES.

State Boundary
Nizamat Boundary
Tehsil Boundary
Railway Open
Railway Projected or under Construction
Metalled Road
Fair Weather Road
Irrigation Canals
Proposed Canals - Bhakra Dam Project.
Hospital or Dispensary
Rest House
Town sending Member to the Legislative Assembly
Area irrigated by Gang Canal & others.
Area to be irrigated under the Bhakra Dam Project.
Capital
Head Quarters of Tehsils

BIKANER
GANGANAGAR

FEROZEPORE CANTT.
SUTLEJ RIVER
SURATGARH
LUNKARANSAR
SARDARSHAHR
SRIDUNGARGARH
RAJGARH
SUJANGARH
SURPURA
BIKANER
JAISALMER
JODHPUR
PATIALA
FEROZEPORE
BHATINDA
MUKTSAR
FAZILKA
GIDDERBAHA
MALOUT
ABOHAR
SADULSHAHR
RATANGARH
CHURU
BEHRI
To Rohtak
To Jodhpur

CHAPTER I

Origin and Establishment of the Rathore Principality of Bikaner.

The Rathores, who came and settled in the inhospitable deserts of Bikaner in the early fifteenth century, were brave men with unshakable belief in their right to conquer. Rao Bika, who laid the foundation of the Rathore principality of Bikaner,[1] was the second and the eldest surviving son[2] of Rao Jodha. Rao Jodha had several sons and since there existed

1. Govt. of India publication "Chiefs & Leading Families in Rajputana," 1894, 1903, 1912 and 1916 editions.
   Sukhdeo Prasad; The Rathores, their origin and Growth, p.x
   Munshi Devi Prasad, Rao Bikaji ka Jeevan Charitra, pp.30-31
   Banki Das; Aitihasik Baton ka Sangrah, account No.2611
   Samal Das; Op.cit, Vol.II, p.478. He puts the date of birth of Rao Bika as A.D.1438.
   Jayasom, Op.cit. Chhands 109-115.
   Dayal Das, Op.cit, Vol. II, p. 21.
   Powlett in his Gazetteer of the Bikaner State mentions Bika to be the sixth son but it cannot be correct in any case. The date of birth of Bika according to Dayal Das is A.D. 1438 and according to other Jodhpur Khyats, taken as correct by Dr. Tessitory, A.D. 1440 (Samvat 1497), vide his "A Progress Report on the work done during the year 1917 in connection with the Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajputana" as published in the Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (New series) Vol.XV, 1919 No. 1, p. 79. Dr. Tessitori found in another Jodhpur Khyat Suja's date of birth given as A.D. 1442 (Samvat 1499).

2. On the occupation of Kanauj by the Muslims, Rathore Siha son of Set Ram came to Rajputana about A.D. 1243 and occupied Pali and the adjoining territories. Mallinath, the tenth in descent, conquered Malani. One of Mallinath's younger brother Viram left Malani because of his not getting lands for maintenance from his brother. His son Chunda earned a name for himself by his adventures. He got the territories of Mandaur in dowry from the Inda Parihars of Mandaur and established a principality there. Since Chunda desired his younger son Kanha to be his successor in preference to his elder son Ranmal, Ranmal left Mandaur and went to Mewar. Kanha succeeded Chunda but since he died at an early age, his younger brother Satta succeeded him. Ranmal with the assistance of the Mewar forces attacked Mandaur and captured it but he continued to stay in Mewar with his son Jodha. Later on, due to some circumstances, Ranmal was got killed by the Sisodias some time prior to 1439. Jodha, who at the time was in Mewar, fled from there for safety hotly pursued by the Sisodias who took possession of Mandaur but Jodha escaped. Jodha assiduously fought to regain the kingdom of his ancestors from the Sisodias

..contd. next page.

every likelihood of a war of succession after his death, he persuaded Bika to try and prove his ability by carving out a kingdom for himself instead of waiting for succession to his father's throne[1]. And thus on September 30, 1465, Rao Bika accompanied by his uncle Kandhal and Napo Sankhla, left Merwar with a grim determination to conquer new lands. Amongst the many loyal adherents who were with Rao Bika, were Rupa, Mandalo, Nathu, and Bika's own brothers Joga and Bida as also Parihar Bela. Bika had with him a band of one hundred Sowars and five hundred foot soldiers[2]. Bika conquered mile after mile of the desert tracts which comprised the Bikaner State. He had to ward off attacks from settlers in and around the regions. Towards the north and west of this tract, the Bhattis held sway. To the north-east and south-east there were the independent rulers of the Jats. Then there were the Bhattis, Chayals and Johiyas. Not far away Hissar, a province of the Delhi empire, was ruled by a Muslim governor. The Kyamkhanis who held the Shekhawati and the Mohils and the Khinchi of the Bidawat region, were not going to watch the emergence of a new power so close to them without resistance.

On the first day of his outward march from home, Rao Bika halted at Mandaur when he offered prayers at the shrine of

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and ultimately captured it about A.D. 1453, founded Jodhpur in 1459 and extended his territories.

1. According to Dayal Das ri Khyat (Vol.II, pp.1 & 2) one day Bika arrived rather late at the Darbar of his father and after offering his respects to his father, he took his seat by the side of his uncle Kandhal. A conversation ensued between them in whispers whereupon Rao Jodha tauntingly asked what conquests the two were planning. Kandhal immediately stood up and took the challenge and pledged to conquer new lands. Napa Sankhla, once the Chief of Janglu and who had been driven out from there by the Bilochis, was at the time present in the court. He suggested that Bika should conquer Janglu.

   According to Jayasom (Op.cit. Shlokas 110-115), Rao Jodha was prevailed upon by one of his wives Jasmade, a step-mother of Bika, to ask Bika to carve a new kingdom for himself so as to ensure the gaddi to her son.

2. Dayal Das, op.cit. Vol. II, p.3

Gauriji. Further on his march, Bika stopped at Deshnoke and paid his respects to Karniji[1], a holy lady born in a Charan family and who was held in great reverence by her people for her supernatural powers. As the history of Bikaner will unfold itself, we shall see the great guiding force that. Karniji is believed to have exercised over the rulers of Bikaner in the generations to come. Karniji is said to have prophesied that Bika would surpass his father in glory and might and that many a great person would be proud to acknowledge him as their overlord.[2]

As directed by Karniji, Rao Bika settled down in the nearby place of Chandasar where he stayed for three years. Thereafter he moved on to Deshnoke[3] where he visited Karniji frequently. Later he conquered the adjoining territories and settled at Kodamdesar where he proclaimed himself the overlord or king in A.D. 1472.[4]

According to the Khyats Rao Shekha, the ruler of Pugal, was given to plundering; and once while returning from a plundering raid on Multan he was confronted with the army of the Subedar of Multan in which fight several of him men were killed and he was captured. Shekha's wife sought the help of Rao Bika in rescuing Shekha. On Rao Bika's freeing Rao Shekha from captivity, Shekha's daughter Ranga De or[5]

1. Karniji was born in A.D.1387 in a Charan family at Suwap in the Jodhpur State. She was the daughter of Meha and was married to Depa son of Bithu Kaha of village Santhi in the Bikaner State. People recognised her as the incarnation of goddess Devi. She had miraculous powers of foretelling the future. It was with her blessings that Rao Bika founded the Bikaner State and she is still worshipped by the royal family of Bikaner as also by the people in general not confined to the limits of the Bikaner territory but even from far and wide. She passed away in A.D. 1538.
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.3
3. Ibid.
4. Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.478
   Munshi Devi Prasad, Rao Bikaji ka Jeevan Charitra, p.5
   Dayal Das, op.cit. Vol. II, p.5
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.2
   Nainsi, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.198.
5. Bithu Suja, Op.cit. Chhand 48.

Rang Kunwari was given in marriage to Rao Bika[1].

In 1478, Rao Bika planned to have a fort constructed near the tank at Kodamdesar[2] which was resented to by Rao Shekha. Since Rao Bika continued to pursue his plans, the Bhatis became hostile and gathering a strong force with the help of Kalikaran, the younger son of the Rawal of Jaisalmer, attacked Bika who, with the help of his brother Bida and uncle Kandhal, inflicted a heavy defeat on the Bhatis[3]. Inspite of their defeat, the hostilities of the Bhatis continued unabated. Bika, therefore, resolved to find another site for the fort and deputed Napo and several others to select a site. The explorers came to a spot called the Rati Ghati which they discovered to be auspicious[4] and here Bika laid the foundations of a fort. But the search for a still more propitious site was continued by Napo and his companions. Napo then selected another site[5] for constructing another and larger fort. Here was laid the foundation of Bika's fort in 1485 and the building of the city was begun in 1488.[6]

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.4-5
   Munshi Devi Prasad, Rao Bikaji ka Jeevan Charitra, pp.6-7
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.478
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp. 2-3
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.5
   Powlett in his Gazetteer of the Bikaner State (p.3) however says that Bika built the fort at Kodamdesar.
3. Powlett, Op.cit. p.3
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II pp.5-6
4. When Napo came to the spot he found a sheep with two lambs in a Kair thicket defying a pack of wolves whom he drove away and declared the site as auspicious.
5. Not very far from the first site they found a man asleep with his head resting on a tuft of Bhurut grass around which was coiled a snake. Napo and his companions sat down to watch the movements of the snake who, after some time, uncoiled itself and went towards the site first selected. This second site was considered by Napo and his companions to be even more auspicious.
6. Powlett, Op.cit. p.4
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.6-7
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.478-79
   Nainsi, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.199
   Tessitori, Op.cit. p. 72.
   The following couplet also preserves the date of the foundation of Bikaner:-

   पनरै सै पैतालवे, सुद बैसाख सुमेर। थावर बीज थरपियो बीकै बीकानेर॥

In 1473 Rana Uda of Udaipur, who had been driven out of his territories, came with his two sons Sainsmal and Surajmal to Bikaner and was afforded shelter by Rao Bika but was not given the help sought by him to regain his territory. Rana Uda then took shelter with Ghyasuddin Khilji.[1]

On the north-eastern border, the Jats were in power. Of these the Godaras voluntarily acknowledged the sovereignty of Bika[2], mainly to secure protection from the onslaughts of the Johiyas and the Bhatis. Later, when Bika came forward to the help of Pandu, the chief of the Godaras, against Pulo, the chief of Sarans and inflicted a crushing defeat the other Jat clans also gradually acknowledged Rao Bika's sovereignty and thus 1664 villages of the various Jat clans were annexed to Bikaner State.[3]

Bika then invaded Singhana and subjugated the Johiyas and later attacked the Khichis who held 140 villages in the centre of Bikaner, killed Deo Raj and annexed the villages. He also siezed some of the territories of the Bilochis and Kyamkhanis in the direction of Sindh and took Shekhawati and Karanwati from the Pathans and others of

1. Nainsi, Op.cit. Vol. I, p.39
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. I, p.338
2. The Godaras were, in recognition of their loyalty and voluntarily accepting the suzerainty of Bika, given the privilege of putting the Raj Tilak on the forehead of the rulers of Bikaner and this they enjoy to the present day. The tilak is put in blood by the Godara head by cutting his thumb.
3. Powlett, Op.cit. p.4. He details them as under:-

Name of the Clan.	No. of villages.	Principal villages.	Name of the chief.
Godaras	360	Ladhri & Shekhsar	Pandu
Sarans	360	Bhandang	Pulo.
Kaswas	360	Sidhmukh	Kaur Pal
Beniwals	-	Raisalana	Raisal.
Puniahs	360	Bara Lundi	Kana
Sihags	140	Sunyee	Chokho
Soduans	84	Dhansi	Amra.

Hissar. Thus Bika's kingdom by now extended to three thousand villages and its boundaries touched those of the Punjab.[1]

Bika soon came into conflict with the Muslim rulers of Delhi. His brother, Bida, at the request of his father-in-law liquidated a number of the latter's relations; and while he was strengthening the Rathore hold on Dronpur Chhapar, Barsal and Narbad (nephews of Bagha son of Kandhal) who had been expelled from their home, made their way to Delhi accompanied by Bagha, a discontented son of Kandhal. At Delhi they served Sultan Bahlol Lodi so well that the Sultan ordered the Subedar of Hissar to help Barsal regain his possessions. Sarang Khan, the governor of Hissar, marched with his army to Dronpur. But as Bida did not consider himself strong enough to oppose the combined Muslim and Mohil forces, he made peace with Barsal and went to his brother Bika at Bikaner leaving Chhapar-Dronpur to Barsal.[2]

In an attempt to regain his brother's lost possessions Bika sought the help of his father Rao Jodha but in vain. Bida had incurred the displeasure of his father Rao Jodha by refusing to give Ladnu near Sujangarh to him. Bika, however, collected a force of eight thousand men and with the help of his father-in-law, Rao Shekha, and the chief of Singhana marched against the enemy after obtaining the blessings of Karniji. He left Napo, the Sankhla chief, incharge of the fort at Bikaner. When he was about eight miles from Dronpur he halted his army, for Sarang Khan, who was present at Dronpur had ordered his army to get ready to check Bika's advance. Bika arranged a secret meeting with Bagha and reproached him by saying "Kaka (uncle)

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.12.
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.6
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.12

Kandhal has been so good to me as to risk his all to get me the Bikaner Raj by destroying the power of the Jats but you, his son, are now preparing to undo all your father did by aiding the Mohils against me. This hardly becomes the son of Kandhal." Bagha was greatly touched by these words and promised to give up siding with the Mohils in the battle to be fought the next day. He said that he would advise the Mohils to dismount and fight on foot while Sarang Khan's forces would be arranged on their right flank and this should enable Bika's horse to scatter the Mohils in a rush. This is what exactly happened the next day on the battle field. Mohils and Muslims fled from the battle field and both Narbad and Barsal were killed in the fight. The victorious Bika, after a few days stay at Dronpur, restored all the lands ~~back~~ to Bida and thus made him his feudatory.[1]

After the Mohil episode, Kandhal made his camp at Rajasar from where he carried out raids into Hissar. After collecting a sizeable booty, he proceeded to Sahwa where he made his next camp. Sarang Khan collected a strong force and set out to put an end to Kandhal's provocations. Kandhal with his three sons, Rajsi, Nimba and Sura, collected all his men and came out to fight Sarang Khan. While galloping towards the enemy, the girth of Kandhal's saddle broke which he got down to repair, but before he could remount the horse, he was surrounded by Sarang Khan who launched an all-out attack and scattered Kandhal's forces. The seventy-three year old Rathore supported by only fifteen men gave a tough fight to Sarang Khan and died gallantly while engaged in a hand to hand fight, killing twenty-three of the enemy,[2] on Paush Badi 5, Samvat 1546 (A.D. 1489).

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.14-15.
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp. 6-8
   Munshi Devi Prasad, Rao Bikaji ka Jeevan Charitra, pp.21-2
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp. 15-16

When Bika heard of Kandhal's death, he was full of rage and took a vow that he would not take any food till he could avenge Kandhal's death. He asked his father Rao Jodha for help which was readily given. Rao Jodha led his army personally and joined Rao Bika at Dronpur from where their combined forces marched against Hissar and came to clash with the enemy at the Jhans village. Sarang Khan was killed in battle at the hands of Nara, but Rao Bika also lost one of his sons.[1]

Kandhal's death having thus been avenged, Rao Bika and Rao Jodha returned to Dronpur where Rao Jodha made Rao Bika make two favours, to give up Ladnu and to be content with what he had won for himself and not deprive his brothers in Jodhpur of any part of their patrimony. Rao Bika agreed to these provided Rao Jodha granted his earlier request to give him the cherished heir-looms as he was the eldest surviving son of the family and Rao Jodha promised to have them sent to Bikaner.[2] Rao Jodha died without being able to fulfil the promise and when Rao Bika sent Bela Parihar, his master of the horses to Rao Sujo, the latter refused to part with them. Embittered by this breach of promise, Rao Bika collected a large force of thirty thousand[3] men and marched out against Jodhpur after receiving the blessings of Karniji for the success of his mission. Rao Suja sent his army to check the advance of Rao Bika's forces and an encounter took place about a kos (roughly two miles) from Jodhpur. The

1. Nainsi, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.206
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 8
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.17-18
   Munshi Devi Prasad, Rao Bikaji ka Jeevan Charitra, pp.28-30
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. vol. II, p.18
   Munshi Devi Prasad, Rao Bikaji ka Jeevan Charitra, pp.30-31
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 9
3. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 9
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.19



In the days when brothers fought brothers, now happily replaced by affection and amity. Rao Bikaji bringing the highly prized and venerated Imperial Rathore and other Heir-looms.

PLATE III

Jodhpur army soon took to heels, and Rao Bika's forces marched forward and besieged the fort of Jodhpur. Ultimately Rao Suja's mother, Jasmadeji, came to Rao Bika and offered to hand over the heirlooms as well as certain other articles which Bika had now added to his demand and these being delivered, Rao Bika returned to Bikaner.[1]

In those days Bika's two brothers Duda and Var Singh held sway over Merta. Var Singh was a restless freebooter who had raided Ajmer carrying away rich booty. Malu Khan, the Subedar of Ajmer, finding himself incapable of checking Var Singh's incursions, invited him as a friend but when Var Singh came, he was taken prisoner. Duda, on hearing the news, sought the help of Rao Bika who promised to come forthwith. Duda applied to Rao Sujo (of Jodhpur) too for help who also sent his forces. The combined Bikaner and Jodhpur forces marched upon Ajmer and Malu Khan sued for peace and released Var Singh.[2]

Rirmal, the Thakur of Khandela in the Shekhawati area, frequently raided the Bikaner area and once he caused great damage whereupon Rao Bika marched against him. An engagement took place between their two armies and Rirmal was defeated.[3]

Rao Bika had for some time been wishing to extend his sway over territories in the region of Delhi. Having collected a large army, he marched on Rewari and occupied

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.20-21
   Munshi Devi Prasad, Rao Bikaji ka Jeevan Charitra, pp.35-39
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.479-80
   Banki Das, Op.cit. account No. 2611.
   The heirlooms brought from Jodhpur were -
   (1) Sandalwood throne; (2) Chhatra; (3) Chanwar; (4) Sword of Rao Jodhaji; (5) Shield of Rao Jodhaji; (6) Katar of Harbuji Sankhla; (7) Hiranyagarbha idol of Lakshminarainji; (8) Large silver idol of Devi Nagnechiji; (9) Karand; (10) Dakshinavart Shankh; (11) Bhanwar Dhol; (12) Bairisal Nagara; (13) Bhunjai Degs; and (14) Dal Singar.
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.21-22
   Samal Das, Op.cit. vol. II, p.479
   Munshi Devi Prasad, Rao Bikaji ka Jeevan Charitra, pp.39-41
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 9
3. Powlett, Op.cit. p.10
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.24

a large piece of territory[1]. Rirmal of Khandela rushed for aid to the Sultan of Delhi and with the assistance of imperial troops commanded by Hindal, he marched against Bika. But Rirmal was no match for the invading army and in the ensuing battle Rao Bika killed both Rirmal and Hindal. This was the last battle fought by Rao Bika.[2]

In the words of Tod, the expeditions of Bika which had been undertaken expressly for conquest had almost been uniformly successful. Within a comparatively short period, Powlett writes, his territory consisted of more than three thousand villages, not including the territory near Rewari or Hissar, extending as it did from Dipalpur and Bhatinda (now in Punjab) in the north, to Fatehpur and Narenda in Shekhawati; Nagor, Hissar and Sirsa to Derawar, or an approximate computed area of not less than 40,000 sq. miles.

With him began the independent history of Bikaner. He left his motherland and came to settle on these northern borders among the Sankhlas of Janglu and from there turned his eyes to the north-east where a vast tract of country partly in the hands of peaceful Jats and partly of warring Mohils, roused his ambition and he embarked on a campaign of conquest which in a short time made him the lord of all the deserts from the borders of Pugal to Hissar and from Ghaggar to the borders of Nagor. With his victorious sword, he knocked at the doors of Derawar, Dipalpur, Bhatner, Bhatinda, Nagor and Fatehpur. Thus the

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.24
   Powlett, Op.cit. p./0
   Munshi Devi Prasad, Rao Bikaji ka Jeevan Charitra, pp.43-44
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.24-25

history of Bika presents a splendid monument of human enterprise and determination.

Rao Bika died on the 11th September, 1504 and was succeeded by his eldest son Rao Nara who occupied the gaddi only for about five months and died without issue. His younger brother, Rao Lunkaran succeeded him on the 23rd January, 1505.[1]

During his short reign Rao Nara was unable to exercise effectively his authority over the outlying districts of his State. The lawless elements made a sudden bid to break loose from the authority at Bikaner. But they had underestimated the abilities of Rao Lunkaran, who immediately after his accession took to putting his house in order and chastising the landholders who had taken back his lands.[2]

In 1509 he led an attack against the rebellious chief Man Singh Chauhan of Dadrewa, who was killed in battle after he had put up resistance for seven months and Dadrewa was annexed to the Bikaner territories.[3]

At this time the Kyamkhanis held sway over Fatehpur and there was constant strife between its ruler Daulat Khan and Rang Khan. Rao Lunkaran took advantage of this situation and marched upon Fatehpur. Consequently, Daulat Khan and Rang Khan joined hands and offered combined resistance but were defeated and made peace with Lunkaran by giving him one hundred and twenty villages where he established his posts.[4] Next the Chayal Rajputs were

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.27
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.481
   Munshi Devi Prasad, Rao Lunkaranji ka Jeevan Charitra, p.48
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 10
   The date of demise of Rao Nara is 13th January, 1505
2. Ojha, Op.cit. Vol. I, p.112.
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p. 28
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.481
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 11,
   Munshi Devi Prasad; Rao Lunkaranji ka Jeevan Charitra, pp. 48-51.
4. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.28
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 11
   Munshi Devi Prasad; Rao Lunkaranji ka Jeevan Charitra, pp. 51-52

attacked and 440 villages brought under subjugation.[1]

When in 1513 Mohammad Khan, the ruler of Nagor attacked Bikaner, Rao Lunkaran moved out with his troops to check his advance and, delivering a night attack, scattered the forces of the Khan who being wounded in the fight had to withdraw to his country.[2] Later, however, when Rao Ganga of Jodhpur invaded Nagor, the Khan of Nagor sought the help of Rao Lunkaran who at once responded, fought and drove away the army and finally arranged peace between Rao Ganga and the Khan of Nagor.[3]

Some time after his return from Nagor, Rao Lunkaran again resumed his activities of territorial expansion. He marched his army against some of his Muslim neighbours and took possession of a number of villages viz. Kanthalia, Deedwana, Bagad, Narbad, Singhana etc.[4] He then marched towards Narnaul, the Nawab of which finding himself too weak to fight against the Rathores tried to make peace but Rao Lunkaran rejected the offer. The Rawal of Jaisalmer smarting under his earlier defeat, took advantage of the situation and joined hands with the Nawab and came forward to fight Rao Lunkaran. Meanwhile, Rao Lunkaran had alienated the sympathies of his sardars by his aggressive designs and when fighting took place, they withdrew from the field leaving Rao Lunkaran and his sons, Pratapsi, Naitsi and Varsi with a handful of soldiers to fight against overwhelming odds, and they were all killed in the field. This battle was fought at Dhosi, three miles from Narnaul, on the 24th June, 1526.[5]

We find that the house of Bikaner had to come in

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.28-29
   Munshi Devi Prasad; Rao Lunkaranji ka Jeevan Charitra, pp. 52-53
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 11
2. Bithu Suja, Op.cit. Chhands 57-61
3. Ibid, Chhands 74-75.
4. Ibid, Chhands 75, 76, 78, 80-81.
5. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp. 34-36
   Bithu Suja, Op.cit. Chhands 84-93.

conflict with the ruling powers at Delhi from, we may say, its very coming into existence. At that time Bahlol Lodi had organised an Afghan Confederacy with himself at the Sultan of Delhi and the rest of the Sultanat having been divided amongst various Afghan tribal lords. Hissar was under Sarang Khan and Malu Khan was ruling over Ajmer. Even Nagor was under an Afghan chief. The ambitions of Rao Bika for territorial expansion and consolidation were bound to clash with those of the Afghan chiefs who were themselves eager to extend the sway of their own Sultanat. It has already been narrated as to how Bahlol Lodi was approached by the Mohil chief for help and in consequence of which Sarang Khan, the governor of Hissar was deputed to proceed to Mohilwati. Thus began a hostility which raged furiously throughout the remaining reign of Bika. The greatest contribution of Bika consists in his successful efforts to carve out an independent principality for himself without acknowledging either the overlordship or the domination of the Delhi Sultanat. He, like a true adventurer and empire builder, possessed undaunted courage and that explains his attitude towards the Delhi Sultanat. He not only succeeded in defeating the indigenous elements of population residing in the area where he set up his principality, but also held his own against the Lodis of Delhi and their Subedars who, from the very beginning, adopted an attitude of hostility towards him.

Rao Lunkaran followed in the foot-steps of his father and expanded the territories still further. In fact it was this ambition of extending his domains that cost him his life.

CHAPTER II

Bikaner's relations with the early Mughals.

The succession of Rao Jaitsi to the gaddi of Bikaner in 1526 marks the beginning of a new epoch not only in the history of Bikaner but also that of northern India. He succeeded his father immediately before the hostile armies of Babar and Ibrahim Lodi came to grips on the plain of Panipat (April 21, 1526) and Sultan Ibrahim was defeated.[1] Babar's victory brought to an end the Afghan supremacy owing to which the Bikaner principality had remained much disturbed. Babar occupied the Punjab and Multan and the south-western limit of his territories corresponded roughly to that of the modern Punjab which included Abohar, Sirsa, Hansi and Hissar; but Ganeshgarh, Hanumangarh and Ajitpura lay beyond it. To the south was the kingdom of Sind ruled by the Arghuns Shah Beg and his son, Mirza Shah Hussain.[2] Humayun had been appointed the governor of Badakhshan, Kamran of Kabul, Ghazni and Kandhar and Askari of Multan.[3]

At the same time Babar's victory over Rana Sanga at Kanwaha on the 16th March, 1527 removed the last trace of the Rajput confederacy[4] which had been a source of constant menace to the Lodi imperialists.

Within a short time of their coming to India, the Mughals made themselves master of northern India and the vigorous Mughal kingdom was founded by the year 1538. Though Babar had conquered a kingdom, its various provinces were loosely knit, but there was no manifestation of any local rebellions against him. Even then the political

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1. Smith, Op.cit, p.322.
2. S.K.Banerji, Humayun Badshah, p.29
3. Ibid.
4. Smith, Op.cit. p.323.

condition was not very stable. The infant Mughal State had in the Afghans a very strong element of opposition. They had been the rulers of the country since the time of Bahlol Lodi and had imparted military strength to the government. They had acquired a political force in the country. They had originally invited Babar to help them in deposing Sultan Ibrahim, but since Babar decided to retain his conquests, the Afghans became opposed to him and regarded him as an usurper. It was under this shadow of the Afghan-Mughal antipathy that Rao Jaitsi started his political career as the ruler of Bikaner which being in close proximity to the kingdom of Delhi was bound to be influenced by its storm and stress.[1]

The opening years of the reign of Rao Jaitsi were those of anxiety and suspense. Rao Jaitsi's father Rao Lunkaran had lost his life in a conflict with the Nawab of Narnaul aided by the Rao of Jaisalmer. Since the Rathores had set up this principality of Bikaner in the teeth of opposition, the indigenous elements and early settlers who had their own estates and spheres of influence in the area, had all along been eager to take advantage of any weakness of the Rathores and never allowed any opportunity to slip by for making a display of their dissatisfaction. The Bhattis and the Mohils had disturbed the country even during the reign of Rao Bika. After Bika's death, the weak rule of his successors made it possible for them to foment strife, strengthen centrifugal tendencies and make it difficult for the administration being carried out. The unfortunate consequences of Rao Lunkaran's clash with the rulers of Jaisalmer and Narnaul had resulted in his death and strengthening the forces of disorder. Thus Rao Jaitsi found his infant State confronted

1. S.K. Banerji, Op.cit. pp. 30-32.

with grave dangers. While on the one side the Afghan rulers of Nagor and Narnaul were eager to take advantage of the conditions prevailing in the principality, the Rawal of Jaisalmer had his own axe to grind.

Rao Jaitsi, realising this, therefore, first set out to put his house in order as soon as he ascended the gaddi in 1526. He fought Kalyanmal Bida who was responsible for the death of his father, Rao Lunkaran. This attack on Kalyanmal took place on the 4th October, 1527. Kalyanmal escaped and took refuge with the Khan of Nagor. Rao Jaitsi thereupon installed Sanga, the grandson of Rao Bida and son of Sansar Chand on the vacant gaddi of Dronpur[1].

At this stage the political organisation of the Mughal kingdom needs to be noticed. Babar believed in non-preferential treatment of his sons in order to secure cordial relations between them, and appointed the elder ones as governors of the north-western and western regions of his kingdom so as to maintain a strong government. It was in consequence of this that he had made the appointments of his sons Humayun, Kamran and Askari to the territories already referred to and had given instructions at the time of his death to Humayun not only to maintain but enhance the spirit of unity amongst the members of the family. Thus Humayun's domestic policy was, as a matter of fact, pre-determined by the father. Kamran, however, was an ambitious man, and after Humayun's accession, took the first opportunity to extend his dominions, and annexed Lahore. Later, in compliance with the behests of Babar to maintain domestic solidarity, Humayun made over the province (Punjab) to Kamran and issued a farman confirming the grant of Kabul, Kandhar and the Punjab, and made a further grant of Hissar Firoza soon after.[2]

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.37-38
2. S.K.Banerji, Op.cit. pp. 52-57

On the death of Babar, Kamran set himself up as the independent sovereign of the Punjab and Afghanistan with his headquarters at Lahore. By 1537 Humayun and Kamran had extended their sway further and dominated and subjugated the neighbouring country. Bikaner, however, remained independent and this was an eye-sore to the proud Kamran. He, therefore, ordered the mobilisation of his army to invade Bikaner. Another reason recorded for the invasion of Bikaner by Kamran is that a Jain priest had got offended with the conduct of the Bikaner soldiers when Khetsi, grandson of Kandhal, occupied Bhatner under the orders of Jaitsi. The Jain Sadhu thereupon approached Kamran in Delhi to invade Bikaner. Kamran marched with a strong army in 1538 upon Bhatner which fell after a brave resistance by Khetsi who was in command of the fort, and by a handful of his men.[1] Emboldened by this victory, the Mughals marched on Bikaner[2] and demanded acknowledgement of the overlordship of Kamran as also the payment of a large sum by way of tribute. Rao Jaitsi became very indignant and sent back Kamran's messenger. The next morning saw the town invaded by hordes of the Mughal army which had also surrounded the fort of Bikaner. Rao Jaitsi hurried to Deshnoke where he offered prayers to Karniji and invoked divine assistance and being convinced of it, he launched a night attack on the enemies who were taken by surprise and completely

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1. Nainsi, Op.cit., Vol. II, p.192
2. Agar Chand Nahta, Bikaner Jain Lekh Sangrah, Introduction, p. 10, text p.2.
   Shilalekh 2(ब) "..... संवत १५६१ वर्षे मुद्गलाधिप कामरां पातसाहि समाजे विनीशित परिकरस्य उद्(द्ध)रित श्री आदिनाथ मूलनायकस्य बेहिधरा गोत्रे मं० बच्छा पुत्र मं० नरसिंह भार्या श्रा० ढीऊल (? बीझल) दे पुत्र मं० नेधा भार्या सहिगल दे पुत्र मं० वयरसिंह ---- श्री जयतसीहं विजय राज्ये ॥"

routed.[1] Legend goes that divine help came to the aid of Rao Jaitsi and thousands of Charnis were seen by Kamran as causing havoc in his army. At day break, the remnants of the Mughal hordes were seen fleeing for their lives towards Lahore.[2] In fact Kamran retreated in such a hurry

1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.54.
Journal of Indian History, Vol. XI parts I-III, 1932, p.194; Article "Humayun and Maldev" by Prof. Sri Ram Sharma of Lahore.

A very graphic description of the battle is given by Bithu Suja in Rao Jaitsi ro Chhand as translated by Dr. Tessitori in "A Progress Report on the work done during the year 1916 in connection with the Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajputana" (issued on 10th Nov. 1917).

"Grasping and bending (it) with the pinchers of the dagger, (he) took (it), then he blew with a great force (into the furnace) and melted (it), made a lump (of it), then he beat (it) with the mallet of the arms, and having made (it) straight from crooked (that it was), he polished (it), then with the sword he cut (it) into pieces, and (afterwards) he weighed it against the weights of gold sayeth Sivo: the son of Luna Karana (hastly) passed (it, under the form of) spears, through the Jantri (of the enemy bodies). (In this way) rava Jeta si broke and wrought the army of Kamran, as the goldsmith does with gold.

"Jingling horse bells and elephant-bells were adapted to the feet (to produce) as it were the music of anklet bells, coats of arms (were put on) in the place of bodice, warlike trumpets were sounded (in the place of ordinary) drums, helmets were put on on the head in the place of flowers, the time was beaten with the swords, the loins were girdled up for a strife, and the body of the enemy was curved with blows. (In this way) the invincible son of rava Luna Karana-(sayeth) the poet Sivo: I am telling the truth- rava Jeta si made the army of Kamrao dance (like an actor) in an acrobatic performance.

"Arranging (his) threefold army like the Kunda, as it were, whilst the blood was streaming from the many wounds like the ghee, and (pouring in) the horses, the men and elephants like the flour, as it were (he) instantly formed the determination (to accomplish) the sacrifice. The cloud of dust appeared like the column of smoke, and the (flashing) swords split up like the flames. (Then) taking the heads of the enemies as the cocoanuts, whilst the vultures (for the sake of the flesh) were assembling (like as many Brahmins) in the sacrificial ground the son of Luna Karana performed the sacrifice of the battle. Sayeth the poet Sivo: (in this way) rava Jeta si maketh a sacrifice (of his) enemies (in the fire), and Sankara putteth on the skulls- the ashes, as it were, (remaining from the fire of the sacrifice.)

2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.54.



Invasion of Bikaner by Prince Kamran, son of the Emperor Baber, at the head of the Imperial Army, which was routed by the Bikaner Army, led by Rao Jet Siji, the 4th Ruler of Bikaner.
A.D. 1534.

PLATE IV

and so great was the confusion that when his royal umbrella dropped off at the village of Chotriya, he did not stop to pick it up.[1] This village was later bestowed by Rao Jaitsi upon the Charans[2] from whose family Karniji hailed and who still preserve the umbrella as a memento of the Rathore victory over the Mughals.

Maldeo, son of Rao Ganga of Jodhpur, who was dissatisfied with his father owing to large territories having gone out of his sway, killed him by throwing him out of a balcony and usurped the Jodhpur gaddi. Ambitious as he was, he marched on Bikaner in 1541. According to Jayasom[3], Jaitsi finding Maldeo too powerful for him sent his Minister Nagraj with gifts to Sher Shah for his aid. But meanwhile on Maldeo's launching an attack, Rao Jaitsi took the field and was killed in action on the 26th February, 1542.[4]

At this stage, the saintly lady Karniji, the patron deity of the Bikaner rulers, passed away. From the very day that Bikaner was founded down to the present time, not only the ruling family of Bikaner but also the people at large have been worshipping her and praising her miraculous powers. It is,

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit, Vol. II, p.54.
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 15.
2. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 15
3. Jayasom, Op.cit. Shlokas 205-218.
4. Dayal Das in his Khyat (p.57), however, mentions that when Maldeo came to attack Bikaner, Rao Jaitsi came with his forces to confront the attack and camped at village Saheba. Here some Pathans from whom certain horses had been purchased by Rao Jaitsi and who had not been paid by the negligence of the Kamdars, came and demanded payment. Rao Jaitsi thereupon instructed his men that he was going to Bikaner to arrange for the payment to the Pathans and the news of his departure was not to be made known in the camp. Rao Jaitsi's return to the camp was delayed and the news of his departure leaked out with the result that many of the sardars left the camp with their forces. When Rao Jaitsi returned to camp, Maldeo launched his attack in which Rao Jaitsi was killed with many of his brave warriors.
   Powlett also mentions the incident in his Gazetteer of the Bikaner State, p.16

therefore, not surprising to find references to her miracles in the course of Bikaner history. While people may be critical and sceptical of the miracles wrought by this great saint, they seem to believe with complete faith in the miracles that took place amongst the Christians and others. According to legend; Saint Karniji disappeared miraculously after having cured Rao Jaitsi of a tumor by merely touching the sore and later is claimed to have restored vision to a blind carpenter. The story goes that at Kardian Talai she robed herself in a blanket and went in a trance and suddenly flames burst out on their own and she disappeared. The temple at Deshnoke which is no more than twenty miles away from Bikaner is a place of pilgrimage for thousands of people visiting every year from all parts of Rajasthan. Her temple and her glory is heard of as far south as Ahmadnagar.

In view of the imminent fall of Bikaner, Nagraj, Rao Jaitsi's Minister, had taken Rao Kalyanmal, the eldest son and successor to the gaddi of Bikaner and other members of the royal family with him while going to seek the assistance of Sher Shah and left them at Sirsa, at the time part of the Bikaner territory and a considerable distance from Bikaner[1]. The task of avenging Jaitsi's death fell to his son and successor, Kalyanmal who was born on the 6th January, 1519. When he succeeded to the gaddi of Bikaner in 1542[2], a portion of the Bikaner State territories was occupied by Maldeo of Jodhpur. Rao Kalyanmal attempted to regain the lost territories in which he was assisted by the Godara Jat chief of Shekhsar but had little success[3]. Rao Kalyanmal and his younger brother Bhim Raj therefore decided to approach the emperor (Sher Shah), in Delhi, and Bhim Raj left for Delhi with fifty soldiers[4].

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1. Jayasom, Op.cit. Chhand 215.
2. The Raj Tilak of Rao Kalyanmal was performed in village Thakuriasar according to Dalpat Vilas p.4
3. Powlett, Op.cit. p.17
4. Ibid.

Since Humayun had lost the throne to the Surs and had fled, Rao Maldeo, ambitious as he was, considered this as a suitable opportunity to win over his good will. Accordingly, Rao Maldeo sent a message to Humayun at Bhakkar where the latter had reached on the 26th January, 1541 offering his help.[1] However, as Humayun was hopeful of receiving assistance from Shah Hussain, the ruler of Thatta, he ignored Maldeo's offer but on finding that no help was forthcoming, he led an attack against Shah Hussain in which he was unsuccessful. Humayun, therefore, decided on availing of the offer of Maldeo and reached Phalodi where he encamped and sent his emmisary, Atka Khan, to Maldeo.[2] Maldeo, meanwhile had learnt of the superior strength of Sher Shah who had by then conquered Nagor, and so Maldeo changed his mind about going to the help of Humayun. He, therefore, tried to detain Atka Khan at Jodhpur on some pretext or the other but Atka Khan came to know of Maldeo's intentions and escaped to Phalodi and apprised Humayun of the situation.[3] While Humayun was still at Phalodi, Sher Shah, having returned to Agra from Bengal where he had gone to subdue its Subedar, learnt of Humayun taking shelter in the Jodhpur territory. He, therefore, marched on Jodhpur with a large force and sent word to Maldeo to either turn Humayun out of his territories or be prepared to fight. Humayun learning of Sher Shah's approach and the treachery of Maldeo, fled to Amarkot.[4]

The incident, however, made Sher Shah suspicious of Maldeo about whose ambitious nature he knew only too well. Viramdeo of Nagor had also in the meantime approached Sher Shah with his grievances against Maldeo. Nagraj, the Bikaner

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1. H.W. Elliot, History of India as told by its own Historians, Vol. V, p.211
   B. De, Tabkat-i-Akbari, Vol. II, pp.83-84
2. Elliot, Op.cit. Vol. V, pp. 207-11
   B. De, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.84
   Mirza Kalichbeg Fredunby, A History of Sind, Vol. II, p.85
   Journal of Indian History, Vol. XI parts I-III, 1932, pp. 192-202
   Article "Humayun and Maldev" by Prof. Sri Ram Sharma of Lahore (quotes the authority of Tarikh-i-Hindo Sindh p.282)
   C. Stewart, Tazkirat-ul-Wakiat, pp.36-38.
3. Elliot, Op.cit. Vol. V, pp.211-12.
4. K.R. Qanungo; Sher Shah, pp.275-76
   Elliot, Op.cit. Vol. V p.213

minister took advantage of all these opportunities and succeeded in persuading Sher Shah to march on Jodhpur.[1] Sher Shah was also keen on winning over to his side persons of influence in order to consolidate his position on the throne. The help sought for was, therefore, readily given[2] and Sher Shah with a strong force commenced the march in January, 1544 and reached Merta where he was joined by Rao Kalyanmal from Sirsa and the forces marched to Ajmer where Maldeo's forces were encamping. For one month each side waited for the other to launch an attack but ultimately Maldeo retreated and was pursued by Sher Shah ending in the complete rout of Maldeo and subjugation of Jodhpur.[3] In the meantime Raawat Kishan Singh

1. Jayasom, Op.cit. Chhands 213-15
2. According to Dalpat Vilas (p.5) Sher Shah, when once in difficulty, had, along with his son Salim Shah, been afforded shelter and service by Rao Lunkaran of Bikaner and so was only too willing to render help on this occasion to repay the debt of gratitude.
3. Powlett, Op.cit. p.21
   Nainsi, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.158-59
   A graphic description of the battle is also given by Bithu Suja in his composition "Rao Jaitsi ro Chhand" and translated by Dr. Tessitori in his "A Progress Report on the work done during the year 1916 in connection with the Bardic and Historical Survey of Rajputana" (issued on 10th November, 1917) -

"When at the reverbration(of the crash) the other monarchs trembled in their hearts, (only then)the world ~~knew~~ knew the deed of the son of Jeta si. (For) Kalyana had brought over the Mandovaras the great emperor, like an immensurate rock(to crush them), (on the one side) the Muhammadan warriors(?) charged to gather their manly strength and their homes. Like a powerful imponderable stone, the Sultan fell with a thud over the breast of rava Mala(de) At the first knock, Mala (De) fled abandoning (his) domains and (his) warlike spirit, and the earth was cleared by the destruction (passed over it) by Sura, (the emperor) whom (Kalyana Mala) had brought -for revenge of rava (Jeta si)- like a huge (?) stone, (as it were), to crush Jodhpur.

Crushed were the enemies and avenged was the feud, and Mala(De) was ruined, whilst the grand son of (Luna) Karana the ornament (of the Rathoras) over-flowed (with joy). The great rava was repelled, and the city of Viko triumphed, and the earth (became safe under its) protector, Kalyana Rathora.

had taken possession of the Thanas established by Maldeo in Bikaner and even recaptured the fort of Bikaner from the governors of Maldeo and proclaimed Kalyanmal as the ruler.[1] After the subjugation of Jodhpur, Sher Shah put the Raj Tilak on Kalyanmal[2] who returned to Bikaner. Nagraj went with Sher Shah to Delhi and after some time when he was returning to Bikaner died on the way at Ajmer. Kalyanmal who had also gone to Delhi to plead his cause with Sher Shah, accompanied him to Delhi and then returned to Bikaner with his permission. From this day onwards, the Rulers of Bikaner came into direct diplomatic relations with the Imperial Power at the centre.

On returning to Bikaner, Rao Kalyanmal held a Darbar and publicly acknowledged his appreciation of the assistance given to him by his brother Bhim Raj on whom he bestowed the title of "Gai Bhum ra Bahru" - the restorer of the lost land. Rawat Kishan Singh received Jetpur.[3]

Soon after the death of Sher Shah on the 24th May, 1545 in the battle of Kalinjar, Rao Maldeo re-occupied Jodhpur and led an invasion into Merta then held by Jaimal[4], son of Viram Deo. Finding himself unable to face the attack unaided, Jaimal sought Kalyanmal's help which was readily given and as a result of which the Jodhpur forces were defeated.[5]

When Akbar ascended the throne, Haji Khan, a powerful general, was the governor of Alwar. Akbar sent his army under the command of Muhammad Sarwani Nasir-ul-Mulk to conquer the territories and drive out Haji Khan who fled to Ajmer.[6] Rao Maldeo coming to know of this, sent Prithviraj Jaitawat to

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1. Jayasom, Op.cit. Shlokas 213-22
   Bikrampur occuring in these shlokas means Bikaner.
2. Ibid.
3. Powlett, Op.cit. p.21
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.76
4. After defeating Maldeo and conquering Jodhpur, Sher Shah had restored Merta to Viramdeo.
5. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.78-82
6. Beveridge, Akbarnama, Vol. II., pp. 71-72.
   Elliot, op. cit., Vol. VI., pp. 21-22.

plunder the fleeing Haji Khan who, being unable to face alone the attacks of Prithviraj, sought the help of Maharana Udai Singh of Udaipur and Rao Kalyanmal which was readily given. Prithviraj and his band turned back without engaging in any fight. Rao Kalyanmal's forces also returned.[1]

In the year 1560 when Bairam Khan was divested of the powers of Prime Minister by Akbar, he requested permission to go on pilgrimage to Mecca but it soon transpired that he intended to go to the Punjab and foment rebellion. Akbar, therefore, marched his forces against him. Bairam Khan tried to escape to Gujerat via Marwar, but learning that his way was blocked by Rao Maldeo, he turned back and sought shelter with Rao Kalyanmal and his son Rai Singh who extended their traditional Rajput hospitality to him.[2]

Thakursi, the brother of Rao Kalyanmal, had already snatched Bhatner from its chief Ahmad and was holding it for some time and had also brought under his sway the neighbouring parganas of Sirsa, Fatehabad and Siwani. At one time the imperial treasury was plundered by dacoits within his territory and so Akbar ordered Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Subedar of Hissar to attack Bhatner. It was besieged but without success for a long time, but at length when the pressure increased and supplies cut off, the last Rajput sally was made. Thakursi and his men died fighting and Nizam-u-Mulk occupied the fort.[3] Bagha, the eldest son of Thakursi thereupon repaired to Bikaner where he stayed with his uncle for some time and then with the permission of Rao Kalyanmal, went to the court of the emperor at Delhi. There he was able to attract the attention of the emperor by his extraordinary strength and prowess, having once strung a Persian bow which none else in the court could do and on another occasion killed a tiger with bare hands. The

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp. 87-90
   Elliot, Op.cit. Vol. VI, pp.21-22
2. B. De, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.243
   Elliot, Op.cit. Vol. V p.265
   H. Blochmann; Ain-i-Akbari, Vol. I, p.316
   H. Beveridge; Akbarnama, Vol. II, p.159
   Munshi Devi Prasad, Rao Kalyanmalji ka Jeevan Charitra, p.10
3. Powlett, Op.cit. pp. 22-23
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.83-86
   Munshi Devi Prasad Rao Kalyanmalji ka Jeevan Charitra p.106

emperor was so much impressed that he asked Bagha to ask for a favour and Bagha begged for the restoration of his home which was duly granted. The event was commemorated by Bagha by building a temple of Nathji Maharaj Sri Gorakhnathji at Bhatner[1].

Rao Kalyanmal, far-sighted and shrewd ruler as he was, soon realised that it was in his interest to secure the friendship of the Mughal King whose power and strength were daily increasing. The wisdom of the decision could not be disputed when note is taken of the internecine raids by the neighbouring sister-State of Jodhpur. Accordingly, when Akbar, in 1570 visited Nagor on his way back from a pilgrimage to the shrine of Khwaja Mohi-ud-Din Chishti at Ajmer, Rao Kalyanmal accompanied by Maharajkumar Rai Singh went to Nagor and remained in attendance on the emperor till he left for the Punjab when Rao Kalyanmal returned to Bikaner[2], but Maharajkumar Rai Singh accompanied the emperor. Rao Kalyanmal was granted a mansab of two thousand zat and two thousand sowars in 1570[3].

This cordial relationship was also very largely affected by Akbar's policy which was of aversion to fighting and bloodshed without first exhausting all other means of achieving his aims and a great diplomat that he was, he achieved very considerable success in this. Realising that the potentiality of Afghan menace to the Mughal empire had not been totally destroyed and that the assistance of the Rajputs in the matter was of utmost importance, he successfully won over their cooperation and support so much so that they even fought amongst themselves for the extension of his dominions, for instance, at Merta in 1562, Jodhpur in 1563, Chittor in 1567-68, Ranthambore in 1569-70 and Kalinjar in 1569. They also vied

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.87
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 23.
2. Beveridge, Op.cit, Vol. II, pp.516-19
   W.H.Lowe, Muntakhabut-Tawarikh, Vol. II, p.137
   Dalpat Vilas, p.15
3. Blochmann, Op.cit. Vol. I, p.357
   Said Ahmed; Umrai Hanud (Hindi), p.284

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with one another in hastening to his camp at Nagor in 1570, acknowledging him as their overlord and Bikaner was no exception. In this Akbar was greatly strengthened by his policy of religious toleration and the abolition of Jazia. Though it is said that Akbar's religious policy was guided by reasons of political expediency, there is no proof to support the theory. On the other hand we have it on the authority of Abul Fazal that Akbar was a deeply religious man, and such a man could naturally influence the Rajputs, more easily particularly as the Rajputs themselves were very religious people.

It should be conceded, however, that soon after his accession Akbar had realised that the Afghan menace was a great threat and that but for active Rajput military assistance it would neither be possible to subdue the Afghans nor to strengthen the Mughal empire.

Thus it may be said that the relations between the House of Bikaner and the Central Powers during the period 1526 to 1574 were forged by the needs of the rulers of Bikaner for protection against the invasions of the sister-State of Jodhpur and brigandage of the indigenous elements and the realisation of the Central Powers of the potential help that Bikaner could afford in consolidating their territories. It must be noticed that the House of Bikaner maintained its independence right down to 1570 when its ruler became a mansabdar of the Mughal court, and the Bikaner rulers continued to be held in high esteem and enjoyed the highest confidence and izzat at the Mughal court.


RAI SINGH'S PARTICIPATION
IN
MUGHAL CAMPAIGNS
KABUL
KANDHAR
MULTAN
BIKANER
PANIPAT
DELHI
AJMER
JAISALMER
JODHPUR
CHITTOR
ABU
SIROHI
AHMADABAD
PATNA
BANARAS
MUGHAL
EMPIRE
GONDWANA
AHMADNAGAR
BIJAPUR
GOLCUNDA
POLYGARS

CHAPTER III

Rai Singh and the Imperial Mughals.

Rai Singh, who was born on July 20, 1541, succeeded[1] Kalyanmal in 1574 and assumed the title of Maharajadhiraj and Maharaja in place of Rao which his predecessors had assumed and so far adhered to.[2] Rao Rai Singh was a contemporary of Akbar.

Rai Singh was a distinguished warrior and played an important role in the consolidation of the Mughal empire. He was always on the move, marching to participate in one campaign or the other on behalf of the Mughals,[3] and it is said that his saddle was his throne. Having been brought up in the true Rajput martial traditions he had imbibed a passion for adventure and exploit. While barely out of his teens,[4] we find him crossing swords with a formidable Pathan chief[5] who had not only inflicted a crushing defeat on the Rana of Udaipur[6] but had also kept at bay the armies of Akbar. His success in the encounter imparted to him a self-confidence which always proved an asset in his later years. His military genius, great prowess and administrative capabilities were the main factors responsible for forging the relations at the time with the Central

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1. Nainsi, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.199
   Tod, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.1132
   Both these give the date of his accession as 1573
   Inscription on the cenotaph of Rao Kalyanmal showing the date of demise as 1574.
   Powlett and Dayal Das, however, take the date of Rai Singh's accession as 1571, which is wrong:
2. "संवत १६३१ वर्षे श्रावण सुदि २ सोमवारे घटी १६ पल ३५ विशखला नक्षत्रे घटी ३१।४४ ब्रह्मनांमा योग घटी ४४।१० अचलदास खीची री वचनिका। महाराजाधिराय महाराय श्री रईसिंघ जी विजे राज्ये ---"
   - Dr. Tessitory, Bardic & Historical Manuscripts, Section 2, Poetry, Bikaner State, p.41.
   "---- अद्य संवत १६५० वर्षे माघ मासे शुक्ल पक्षे षष्ठयां गुरौ रेवती नक्षत्रे साध्य नामनि योगे महाराजाधिराज महाराज श्री श्री श्री २ रायसिंहेन दुर्ग प्रतोली समुर्णीकारिता ----" बीकानेर के दुर्ग के सूरजपोल दरवाजे की प्रशस्ति का अंतिम भाग।
3. Tod, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.1135 -"Raja Rae Singh led a gallant band of his Rathores in all the wars of Akbar."
4. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 24.
   Haji Khan, a commander of Sher Shah and at this time holding the fort and province of Nagor.
5. Alakhdhari, Raja Rai Singh, p.22
6. Ibid, pp.22-24

Powers at Delhi. But these would perhaps have remained unknown, had it not been for the political conditions then prevailing in the country. Rana Pratap was engaged in anti-Mughal activities and the chiefs of Sirohi and Jalore[1] had also joined hands with him. Nearer Bikaner, the conditions at Jodhpur had become chaotic by the arrogance and incompetence of Chandar Sen[2] who, by the influence of his mother, Swaroop De, the favourite Rani of Maldeo, had succeeded to the gaddi of Jodhpur to the exclusion of Ram Singh, the rightful heir. Besides, the conditions in Gujerat were also causing concern to the Mughal rulers at Delhi. It was under these conditions that Akbar had been forced to seek the assistance of the House of Bikaner as also many other Rajput princes and his anxiety for support provided Rai Singh the opportunity to utilise his political sagacity and military prowess for the furtherance of the Mughal cause.

As a result of Chandar Sen's arrogance, most of his sardars had become displeased with him and approached Ram Singh and the other sons of Maldeo with a proposal to depose Chandar Sen which they were only too loath to accept. They, therefore, carried out raids against Jodhpur but with little success. Ram Singh then sought the assistance of Akbar and it was readily given[3]. With this armed assistance, Ram Singh laid siege to the Jodhpur fort but after seventeen days the siege was raised and a compromise arrived at by the intervention of influential sardars whereby Chandar Sen granted more lands to Ram Singh and Udai Singh[4]. Though the imperial forces returned

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1. Surtan Deora of Sirohi and Tajkhan of Jalore.
2. Chandar Sen was the third son of Rao Maldeo but had succeeded to the gaddi of Jodhpur according to the wishes of his father. This had resulted in the disaffection of his two elder brothers, Ram Singh and Udai Singh. By his arrogant behaviour, he had also caused dissatisfaction among his Jagirdars who joined hands to instal Ram Singh on the gaddi.
3. Ojha, Op.cit. Vol, I, pp. 164-65.
4. Ibid.

at the time, they again invaded Jodhpur under the command of Hussain Kuli Khan. Chandar Sen bought peace by paying Rs.400000/-[1] But this was only temporary and Kuli Khan again invaded Jodhpur with a strong force. This time Chandar Sen gave fight but had to abandon Jodhpur and take refuge at Bhadrajoon.[2]

All these events took place before 1570 when Akbar visited Nagor and Kalyanmal was still on the gaddi of Bikaner. The dispossessed princes, Ram Singh and Udai Singh, came to wait upon the emperor at Nagor in the hope of securing his goodwill in their cause. Chandar Sen also repaired there with his son Rai Singh to plead for the restoration of Jodhpur to him. Finding no encouragement, Chandar Sen left for Bhadrajoon after some time leaving his son Rai Singh behind in the service of the emperor. At the same time, as has been narrated earlier, Kalyanmal, realising that the safety of the State of Bikaner and the good of his House lay in cultivating friendly relations with the Mughal power which was growing in strength day by day, also availed himself of the opportunity of paying his respects to the emperor. He, therefore, together with his son Rai Singh proceeded to Nagor and waited upon the emperor. They stayed there for some time and when Akbar left for the Punjab, Kalyanmal leaving Rai Singh at the court to continue negotiations, returned to Bikaner.[3]

By this time, Gujerat which had managed to become independent after the fall of the Afghan dynasties, had become the scene of chaos and disorder, of oppressions and insurrections. Akbar, who had gained respite by suppressing disturbances in other parts of the country, therefore, now devoted his attention to Gujerat. At the head of his armies he marched on the 2nd July, 1572 for Agra. On reaching Ajmer, he sent Mir Mohammad, Khan-i-Kalan, with a large army in advance and himself followed with a further large contingent. Maharajkumar

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1. Ojha, Op.cit. Vol. I, pp. 164-65
2. Ibid.
3. Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp. 516-19
   Lowe, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.137.

Rai Singh was also with him at the time. On reaching Merta, Akbar learnt that the emissaries from Sirohi who had gone to meet Khan-i-Kalan with terms of peace had treacherously stabbed him. Moreover, when Akbar reached Sirohi, a band of 150 Rajputs attacked him but were all killed. Besides, Rana Pratap Singh was a source of constant vexation and Rao Maldeo had also become hostile to the emperor. The high road to Gujerat which passed through the territories of Jodhpur and the security of which was of vital importance for the success of any military operations in this part of the country, had become insecure. Akbar, farsighted as he was, soon realised the gravity of the situation. Rai Singh was, therefore, appointed governor of Jodhpur and entrusted not only with the task of keeping the high road to Gujerat open but also of protecting the royal capital (Agra) and its surrounding territory[1] for which purpose he was also allotted a contingent of the imperial troops, and farmans were issued to the governors and jagirdars of these territories to rēnder him all assistance in the discharge of his duties.

While engaged on these duties Rai Singh learnt that Ibrahim Hussain Mirza, who had been forced to flee from Sarnal by the imperial forces, besieged Nagor. Rai Singh at once hastened to Nagor (1573) with his forces on learning about which Ibrahim Hussain Mirza raised the siege and fled pursued by Rai Singh and his forces which engaged him in a battle near Kathauti and inflicted a heavy defeat upon him, obliging him to flee towards the Punjab.[2]

After quelling the rebellion and appointing Kokaltash as

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1. Elliot, Op.cit. Vol. V, p.341. Elphinstone, History of India, p.496
   Lowe, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.144
   B. De, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.372-73
   Dalpat Vilas, p. 15; Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol. III, p.8
   Lowe mentions that Rai Singh was appointed governor of Jodhpur; Elliot says that Rai Singh was deputed to make sure of the territory of Jodhpur and keep the road to Gujerat open. Beveridge says that Rai Singh was ordered to abide in the territories of Jodhpur. De's statement is similar to that of Elliot. In Dalpat Vilas it is said that Jodhpur was given to Rai Singh.
2. Beveridge, Op.cit.Vol. III, p.50; Elliot, Op.cit.Vol.V,p.354; Lowe, Op.cit. Vol.II, pp.153-54; Dalpat Vilas, pp.20-21 Brajratan Das; Masir-ul-Umra (Hindi), p.355



Raja Rai Singhji, 6th Ruler of Bikaner and created "Raja", one of the greatest Generals of the Emperor Akbar, slaying in single combat Mirza Mohammed Hussain, Governor of Gujerat.
A.D. 1573.

PLATE V

the governor of Gujerat, Akbar returned to Fatehpur. But as soon Akbar had returned to Fatehpur, the rebels in Gujerat again raised their head and Mohammad Hussain Mirza also joined them from Ahmedabad. On hearing the news, Akbar again set out with a large force on 23rd August, 1573 for Gujerat and covered the distance of eight hundred miles in only nine days. Rai Singh who was at the time near Gujerat, also joined the imperial forces. During the encounter that followed, Rai Singh showed great prowess and killed Mohammad Hussain Mirza in single combat.[1]

Rajkumar Ram Singh, the brother of Rai Singh, who was also on the battle-field earned a name for himself by engaging a famous enemy general in fight, bringing him down from the Howdah of his elephant and slaying him. In recognition of his bravery and services, he received a mansab from Akbar while Rai Singh was the recipient of fifty two parganas.[2]

While at Ajmer in 1574 in the seventeenth year of his reign, Akbar received the information that Chandar Sen, the ruler of Jodhpur, was preparing to defy his authority. For this purpose he had strengthened his fortified headquarters of Siwana. The emperor promptly deputed Rai Singh[3] along with several other notable sardars such as Shah Kuli Khan Mehram[4], Shimal Khan[5], Keshodas[6] and Jagat Rai to lead the army. The

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1. Tod, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.1135.
   Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol.III, pp.59-63, 73, 81-82, 85-86.
   Mohammad Hussain Mirza was defeated in the battle, captured and given in the custody of Rai Singh for being marched off to the city. While he was being taken to the city, Ikhtiar-ul-Mulk attacked the escort with a force of five thousand. Akbar sent Shujat Khan and Bhagwan Das to charge the attacking forces and got Mohammad Hussain Mirza executed.
   Dalpat Vilas, pp.22-23.
2. Powlett, Op.cit. p.24
   Dalpat Vilas (pp.22-23) mentions the grant of the parganas of Nagor, Sirsa, Mavoth besides others.
3. Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol. III, p.113
4. A Mansabdar of five thousand during the reign of Akbar.
5. A servant of Akbar who was later promoted as a mansabdar of one thousand.
6. Keshodas was the son of Jaimal of Merta.
7. Son of Dharam Chandra.

This should be treated as the relative account.

imperial forces took Sojat from Kala, son of Ram Singh and grandson of Maldeo. Kala tried to escape his pursuers but finding it impossible to avoid capture, ultimately surrendered and offered to join their ranks. He also brought in his brother Keshodas to fight for the emperor. Having thus reduced Chandar Sen's power of resistance, the imperial forces hastened their movement towards Siwana which was held by Rawal Sukh Raj, a servant of Chandar Sen. The latter sent men to the aid of Sukh Raj, but Rai Singh was able to overpower them. The road to Siwana was now clear for the invading army. Chandar Sen realising the danger, left the fort in the hands of his trusted lieutenants and went into hiding. The fort, so well prepared for a long siege, resisted stubbornly all the attacks of the besiegers. Rai Singh approached the emperor at Ajmer to ask for more troops. Two years passed, but still the fort remained invulnerable. Ultimately Akbar called back Rai Singh and sent Shahbaz Khan in his place who reduced the fort within a few days of his arrival.[1]

Rai Singh undertook some important military missions on behalf of the emperor. In 1576, the twenty-first year of Akbar's reign, Taj Khan, the chief of Jalore and Surtan, the chief of Sirohi, were discovered organising raids in support of Rana Pratap, Akbar's inveterate foe. The Badshah sent for Rai Singh and along with certain other sardars he was charged with the task of punishing the miscreants. Both Taj Khan and Surtan surrendered without offering any resistance. Rai Singh and his adjutant Saiyad Hashim halted for some time at Nadol[2] and successfully wiped out all disloyal elements and effectively blocked all the routes leading out of the Rana's principality of Mewar. Having completed his mission Rai Singh brought Surtan to the king's court. Surtan, however, was not amenable to peace

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1. Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp.113-14, 155, 237-38.
   Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi), pp.355-56.
   Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit. p.213.
2. Nadol is in Godwad Tehsil of Jodhpur. The persian texts give the name as Nadot (in Gujerat) which does not seem to be correct.

terms and took the earliest opportunity to return home without the emperor's knowledge. Rai Singh, therefore, had to lead another expedition against Surtan, who shut himself up in his fort. But he was forced out and chased into his next refuge in the Abu fort. Rai Singh reduced this fort as well in 1577 and taking Surtan a prisoner, went to meet the emperor.[1]

In 1577 when Akbar went to Lahore, he conferred mansab and fifty two parganas on Rai Singh, in recognition of his services in the Gujerat campaigns.[2] In 1578 the Pathans pressed hard on the imperial armies under Rajkumar Man Singh (son of Raja Bhagwan Das) in command of the territories along the Indus. Man Singh sought help from Akbar who sent Rai Singh. After a heavy fighting, the Pathans were defeated and the menace avoided.[3]

In 1581 Akbar's half-brother, Hakim Mirza, who held Kabul yielded to the temptation of snatching territories in India from his brother. A little before this Raja Man Singh the son of Raja Bhagwandas of Amer, had been ordered to go and replace Mohammad Yusuf Khan as the governor of the north-western districts bordering the Indus. On his way there, Man Singh had just reached Rawalpindi when he learnt that a commander of Hakim Mirza's army had reached the other side of the Indus with a large army. Man Singh hurried to check the advance of the enemy. In the ensuing fight Mirza's commander (Shadman) was fatally wounded and the Kabul army routed. When Akbar learnt of this incident, he realised that this failure of Hakim Mirza did not mean the end of the trouble from that quarter. He therefore ordered Rai Singh, Jagannath (son of

1. Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp. 266-67, 278-79.
   Mohammad Said Ahmad; Op.cit. pp. 213-14.
   Brajratan Das; Op.cit. (Hindi), pp. 356-57.
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.112.
3. Alakhdhari, Op.cit., pp.74-75.

Raja Bharmal of Amer), Raja Gopal (a two thousand mansabdar) and several others along with a strong army to march in support of Man Singh[1], but at the same time he sent word to Man Singh that if Hakim Mirza made an attempt to cross the Indus, he should not be checked but allowed to proceed. As expected Hakim Mirza crossed the river on 23rd January, 1581 and reached the Punjab on 6th February; and expecting this move, Akbar also marched with his army towards him. But Hakim Mirza retired with his forces to the other side of the Indus. The emperor made attempts to negotiate peace with his brother, but Hakim Mirza chose to fight, ~~but~~ He was defeated and chased into the fort of Kabul by Akbar. There, however, Hakim Mirza surrendered and Akbar restored Kabul to him. The emperor returned to his capital and Rai Singh was left behind in the Punjab.[2]

About this time when Maharaja Rai Singh was proceeding on the emperor's mission to Sorath, he had to pass through Sirohi. Here Surtan, the chief of Sirohi, offered him great welcome and told him of the trouble his former manager of the State, one Bija Dera, was causing him. Rai Singh guaranteed Surtan the emperor's patronage on condition that he surrendered half of the Sirohi territory to him. On Surtan agreeing to this plan, Rai Singh turned Bija out of Sirohi State.[3]

During a rebellion in Bengal in about 1582 when Masum Khan Kabuli, aided by Tar Khan Diwana and others, had defeated the imperial army sent against them under Khwaja Shamsuddin Khawife, one Nur Mohammad also began to attack the imperial caravans. They gathered a strong army of about thirty thousand horses and five hundred elephants and advanced to meet the imperial forces under the command of Raja Todar Mal whom they

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1. Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp. 518 and 530-31, 532-47.
2. Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp.493-95, 508-09, 518,542,546.
3. Nainsi, Op.cit. Vol. I, pp. 131-33

defeated. Almost the whole of the territory of Bengal and Bihar had by this time fallen into their hands. Taking advantage of this situation, Katlu Khan Afghan, the chief of Orissa also raised the standard of rebellion. Khan-i-Azam sought peace with Katlu Khan who while pretending submission, instigated Bahadur Cauriya, one of the officers in his army to attack the army . sent by Khan-i-Azam with his emmissary Seikh Farid-i-Bukhari. In the encounter the imperial troops suffered heavy losses. Khan-i-Azam, finding himself unable to check the spreading rebellion applied to the emperor for assistance and Raja Rai Singh was sent[1] with his forces to Bengal to cooperate with Khan-i-Azam in quelling the rebellion which task he accomplished so successfully that soon Khan-i-Azam was able to leave Bengal with a large number of subjugated jagirdars and rebels to wait upon the emperor "leaving the Suba empty" i.e. without a governor incharge of the Suba. Although, it is not specifically stated, it is quite probable that Rai Singh held charge of the viceroyalty of Bengal during Khan-i-Azam's absence[2].

In 1585, Rai Singh was deputed by the emperor to lead a punitive expedition against the people of Bilochistan who had broken out against the Mughal authority. Rai Singh brought such pressure to bear on them that the Bilochi leaders were forced to surrender to him. They were brought to the presence of the emperor who restored to them their jagirs on receiving assurances of their fidelity[3]. In the same year the pargana district of Bhatner in the sarkar of Hissar Firoza was conferred and confirmed upon Rai Singh in exchange of Lakhipur, a place in the pargana of Dibalpur in the Sarkar of the Punjab[4].

In 1586 the emperor made certain changes in the administrative set up and Rai Singh was deputed along with Raja Bhagwandas (of Jaipur) to Lahore[5].

1. Erskine, Op.cit. p.318. He puts the date of Raja Rai Singh being sent to Bengal as two years after his deputation to Kabul i.e. about 1584.
2. Alakhdhari, Op.cit. p.80
3. Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp.716-17 and 739
   Elliot, Op.cit. Vol.V, pp.450-53
   Lowe, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.360
4. Akbar's farman dated 15th Rajab, 993 A.H. This is said to be oldest Mughal farman in the world.
5. Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol. III, p.779

The foundations of the present fort at Bikaner was laid on the 30th January, 1586 and it was completed on 17th January, 1594. According to the Khyats, Raja Rai Singh had, while at Burhanpur, sent instructions to his minister, Karam Chand for building this fort.[1]

In 1587, Kasim Khan Mirbehri, the Mughal subedar of Kashmir was saved from defeat at the hands of the rebellious Kashmiris by a daring stand made by Kaka Shrang,[2] Rai Singh's uncle with his stout forty Rajput warriors. All these Rajputs saved the situation for the emperor at the cost of their lives. Each one of them perished in the battle. Subsequently Akbar sent Yusuf Khan to replace Kasim Khan who returned to the imperial court.[3] This incident proves how much the military glory of Akbar was achieved with the help of the ruler of Bikaner and the members of his house. But not all members were loyal to the emperor. Rai Singh's brother Amra (Amar Singh) having collected a band of desperados took to lawless activities which brought him into conflict with the Mughal authority. In one such conflict against Hamza, the Jagirdar of Bhimbe, he lost his life. Amra's son Keshodas set out to avenge his father's death, but by mistake instead of killing Hamza's son, he killed one Karam Beg. Keshodas was chased by pursuers, joined by some men of Rai Singh and Khan-i-Khanan, son of Bairam Khan. They overtook Keshodas and killed him and most of his companions. They also took away some of them as prisoners.[4]

On December 3, 1591, the emperor sent Rai Singh to the aid of Khan-i-Khanan. Jani Beg, the chief of Thatta had shown signs of insubordination and Akbar had sent Khan-i-Khanan to punish him. Jani Beg, however, entrenched himself behind strong defences, offered resistance and often sallied out to harrass

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.122
2. In Akbarnama (Beveridge, Vol. III, p.797) Shrangji is mentioned as cousin which is not correct.
3. Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp. 796-98
4. Beveridge, Op.cit., Vol. III, p.908

the emperor's forces. He never gave an opportunity for any large scale combat. The imperial forces began to lose their morale for their ranks began to get thinned down. Khan-i-Khanan sent urgent calls for reinforcements to the emperor and the emperor then ordered Rai Singh, a mansabdar of four thousand, to go to the assistance of Khan-i-Khanan[1]. This is the first mention made in the Persian chronicle of the period of Rai Singh's high status at the Mughal court.

Soon after a tragedy took place in Rai Singh's family. Virbhadra son of Ram Chandra, the Baghela chief of Bandhugarh (Rewa) who had married Rai Singh's daughter died in 1593 of a fall from his Palki while travelling. When the emperor heard of this, he called on Rai Singh personally on the 25th July, 1593 to offer his condolence and in view of the infancy of the deceased's children, he persuaded Rai Singh to dissuade his daughter from performing Sati[2]. This shows in what high honour and terms of intimacy Raja Rai Singh came to be held by the Mughal emperor.

In 1593 Rai Singh was sent on an expedition to the Deccan to subdue Burhan-ul-Mulk. Burhan-ul-Mulk the chief of Ahmednagar had many a time been given assistance by the emperor and had practically been treated as a dependent and protected ruler and had to submit a fixed amount of Nazrana to the emperor. But later Burhan-ul-Mulk showed signs of insubordination and failed to pay the tribute. Akbar, therefore, sent Rai Singh along with Shahzada Daniyal at the head of a strong army to the Deccan to punish Burhan-ul-Mulk[3].

The same year the emperor gave Rai Singh the province of Junagarh (southern Kathiawar) which shortly before had been

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1. Elliot, Op.cit. Vol. V, p.462
   Lowe, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.392
2. Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol. III, p.985
   Munshi Devi Prasad, Akbarnama, pp.214-16
   Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit. p.214
   Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi) pp.358-59
3. Elliot, Op.cit. Vol. V, p.467
   Lowe, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.403
   Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp.994-95.

PLATE VI



Raja Bhoj Rathore, an uncle
of Raja Rai Singh.
(Miniature by Nur Mohammad)
1606

conquered and annexed to the Mughal empire by Azam Khan.[1]

Though Rai Singh was very loyal to Akbar and the relations between the overlord and feudatory were cordial, there was occasion in 1597 for friction between the two over, an incident which happened while Rai Singh was at Bhatner and Nasirkhan, a father-in-law of Akbar's, was staying with him. Rai Singh had deputed one of his servants, named Teja, to look after the comforts of this relative of the emperor. But Teja resented Nasirkhan's conduct and reported to Rai Singh about the guest having misbehaved with a Khatri girl. Agreeing with Teja, Rai Singh allowed Teja to use his discretion to bring Nasirkhan to his senses. Teja who was on the look out for an excuse found one when Nasirkhan, on account of some defect in the supplies sent him, addressed Teja in foul language, whereupon Teja and his men beat Nasirkhan. When Nasir returned to Delhi, he complained to Akbar against Rai Singh's men and Akbar ordered Rai Singh to send Teja to him. But Rai Singh reported that Teja had fled. The emperor was so put out that he deprived the Raja of the gift of Bhatner and granted it to Dalpat,[2] the Raja's rebellious

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1. Lowe, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.400.
   A reference to this grant is also made in Akbar's farman dated 9th of Dai 42, wherein it is stated -
   "Whereas courtesy to the strangers and the pardoning of sins is a praiseworthy quality of the Royalty, we have after forgiving the wrongs of Rai Rai Singh, the descendant of the Noblesse and worthy of favours, distinguished him by manifold royal graces and allowed him to depart after restoring (the jagir of) Junagarh and other districts, which we had recently conferred upon him, as specified in the endorsement, from the beginning of Rabi (the spring crop) till year 43."
2. According to Dayal Das ri Khyat, Vol. II, p.129, Nasir Khan while staying at Bhatner misbehaved with a girl and was consequently given a beating by Teja, one of the Raja's servants, at the instance of the Raja himself. Nasir Khan on return to the court, reported the matter to the emperor who asked the Raja to surrender Teja but the Raja did not do so and reported that Teja had fled.
   This also finds corroboration from a composition entitled "Raja Rai Singhji ri Bel", descriptive catalogue of Bardic and Historical manuscripts sec. 2, part I, p.59.
   Persian histories only record the displeasure of the emperor on the misdeeds of Rai Singh's servants having been reported to him.

son, who made Bhatner the base of operations against Bikaner. Rai Singh forthwith hastened to Delhi to seek the emperor's intervention to prevent a civil war in Bikaner. In the meantime Dalpat's enemies, the Bhattis and Johiyas had already secured military aid from the emperor with which they expelled Dalpat from Bhatner. But Dalpat, who had come to Bikaner, was soon able to collect forces to re-occupy Bhatner.

A few important persons at the emperor's court were inimical to Rai Singh. One of them was Raja Rai Singh's former minister Karam Chand. During Rai Singh's long periods of absence from Bikaner on military expeditions on behalf of the emperor Karam Chand had hatched a plot to help Rai Singh's eldest son, Dalpat to usurp the Bikaner Raj. When this nefarious activity of Karam Chand was discovered, Rai Singh wished to shut him up in prison and confiscate his property. But getting wind of his master's displeasure, Karam Chand escaped to Delhi, where he soon secured admission to the emperor's court on account of his proficiency in chess, a game of which the emperor was very fond. The result of Karam Chand's intrigues at court was that Akbar's attitude towards Rai Singh was cold, and Rai Singh avoided going to Delhi. But Rai Singh's able cooperation in maintaining the solidarity and prestige of the empire always proved of such great value to Akbar that he could not for long maintain his attitude of displeasure against the Raja. He confirmed with further additions of territory, the grant of the jagir of Sorath[1] (Saurashtra) and the whole of southern Kathiawar, to Rai Singh and ordered him to proceed to the Deccan. But after receiving this farman on the 20th December, 1597 (V.S. 1654,

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1. Akbar's farman dated 9th of Dai 42.
"The duty of the clerks employed in the province of Gujerat (generally) and the jagirdars of Surat particularly, is that no sooner they receive the knowledge of the contents, obeyed by the heavens, than they should, submitting to the exalted order, commit over the districts as detailed in the endorsement, to his deputies. x x x"
Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp.1068-69

7th of Posh), at Delhi, the Raja returned to Bikaner and did not proceed to the Deccan. The emperor then sent him word that if he did not wish to go to the Deccan, he should present himself at the emperor's court. The Raja accordingly went to Delhi and was received by the emperor back with great favour. Rai Singh then proceeded to the Deccan.

From Akbar's farman dated Dai Mehar the 15th Shaharyar 43, (August 1598), it appears that Raja Rai Singh pleaded the cause of Rawals Ham and Bara. The emperor had such faith in and consideration for the Raja that he goes on to say in the same farman that the Raja's solicitations had been acceded to and that he was sending farmans for these aforesaid Rawals to the Raja for being kept with him and being delivered to them only if he was completely satisfied of their sincerity[1]. In 1600, the emperor grnated the pargana of Nagor in jagir to Raja Rai Singh.[2]

In 1601 Rai Singh was sent by the emperor to Nasik to help Sheikh Abul Fazal who had been deputed to quell the disturbances in the Deccan. But getting news of disturbances in his own State he secured permission to go back to Bikaner.[3]

With the passing of days the emperor became more and more appreciative of Rai Singh's loyalty and required his presence more frequently at court. In 1603 on the day of Dussehra, he ordered Salim to lead an invasion against Mewar. Rai Singh and several other notable Rajput sardars were to accompany him.

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1. "..... His solicitations have been acceded to, and the world-obeyed (royal) orders have been despatched. (Accordingly) he should keep safely with him the farmans (concerning) Rawal Ham and Rawal Bara. If their sincerity is evinced to the quintessence of the realm unanimously and (if they) satisfy him, that they putting the ring of slavery in the ear of their souls, are prepared to make amends for the undone services of the past, then he should giving them the farmans, assure them of the Royal kindness and favour and should submit (the reports of) all the incidents and happenings daily. ....."
2. Farman dated the 3rd Aban, 45 (15th October, 1600)
3. Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp. 1173 and 1184
   Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit. p.215
   Brajratan Das; Op.cit. p.359.

When, however, Salim reached Fatehpur he shirked the difficulties of the campaign entrusted to him and asked for enhancement of imperial aid in men and money or be allowed to go back to his jagir at Allahabad. His wish was granted, and the proposed invasion was given up.[1] In 1604, Akbar divided the pargana of Shamsabad into two, namely, Shamsabad and Nurpur and granted both the parganas as jagirs to Rai Singh. After receiving this jagir Rai Singh came back to Bikaner.[2]

In September 1605 (V.S. Sawan, 1662) emperor Akbar fell ill. It was his last illness and his condition became worse day by day. In anticipation of the imperial throne falling vacant, interested parties began bolstering up the cause of their respective favourites among the possible claimants. Raja Man Singh and Khan-i-Azam who were the two most powerful and influential personages at the Mughal court supported the cause of Prince Khusro, the son-in-law of Raja Man Singh (of Amer) and the son-in-law of Khan-i-Azam. The rightful prince Salim, the eldest son of Akbar, found that his supporters were very weak; but realising that Rai Singh, the Raja of Bikaner (free as he was from ties of close relationship) could be of material assistance to him, Salim sent an urgent call to him to come to the court at Agra,[3] and Rai Singh at once responded to the Prince's call. Akbar died on the night of October 15, 1605.

On the 24th October 1605, Salim succeeded his father Akbar as emperor of India assuming the title of Jahangir. On 11th March, 1606 the first anniversary of Jahangir's accession was celebrated. On this occasion emperor Jahangir raised the mansab of Raja Rai Singh from that of four thousand to five thousand.[4]

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1. Elliot, Op.cit. Vol. VI, p.110
   Beveridge, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp. 1233-34
   Brajratan Das, Op.cit. p.360.
2. Akbar's farman dated 21st Khurdad Elahi 49 year(May, 1604)
3. Salim's farman dated 29th Mihr 50 Elahi (September 1605) at present preserved in the Bikaner Museum.
4. Beveridge and Rogers; Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri, Vol. I, p.1 and 49.
   Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit. p.215.
   Devi Prasad; Jahangirnama, pp. 22 & 52.

A few months after the celebration, Prince Khusro raised the standard of rebellion against the emperor. Jahangir set out to quell it, leaving Rai Singh at Agra with instructions that he should escort the Begums to him when he would send for them[1], and when the emperor actually sent for the ladies, Rai Singh accompanied them. But when at Mathura he learnt from Man Singh Sewra, a Jain Sadhu, that Jahangir's rule would not last more than two years, he left the party and went to Bikaner[2].

On his return to the capital, Jahangir learnt that Dalpat had risen in revolt. The emperor sent a strong force under a number of his leading officers against him. Dalpat abandoned the field after a short fight and went into hiding[3].

Rai Singh returned to the royal court on the 14th January 1608 and through the intercession of Amir-ul-Umra, Sharifkhan, was received back in his favour by the emperor and was allowed to retain his mansab and all his jagirs[4]. The same year Dalpat

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1. According to some other historians, (Iqbalnama, p.5; Masir-i-Jahangiri, p.71; and Kazbini, p.42) Jahangir had constituted a committee of Sheikh Alauddin, Mirza Gyasbeg Tehrain, Dost Mohammad Khawaja Jahan and Rai Singh presided over by Prince Khurram for looking after the safety of the government.
   Dr. Ojha, Op.cit. Vol. I, p.191
2. Beveridge and Rogers, Op.cit. Vol. I, pp. 437-38
   Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit. p.216
3. Beveridge and Rogers, Op.cit. Vol. I, p. 84
4. Beveridge and Rogers, Op.cit. Vol. I, pp.130-31
   Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit. p.216
   In this connection Jahangir's farman dated Aban 2, Rajab-ul-Murajjab, 1015 A.H. deserves special attention -
   " The chosen of the compeers and contemporaries, worthy of favours and obligation, Rai Rai Singh, being specialised for, and elevated by, the Imperial Graces, should know, that it has so reached the (royal) ears of honour and glory that the imprudent Dalpat, through his total ignobility and ill luck, is rough and excessive (in his dealings) with him (Rai Singh) and consequently, he (Rai Singh) has led an army against, and besieged him.
   Whereas our generous temper does not tolerate that any son should be so (disgracefully)disposed to his own father it occurred to our mind, the abode of the manifestations of the (Divine) Grace, that we should appoint (our) victorious armies to punish and chastise him in such a way

...contd. next page.

Singh also sought the emperor's pardon through Khan-i-Jahan, Pirkhan Lodi. He was pardoned.[1]

Rai Singh died on January 22, 1612 at Burhanpur where he was holding the Deccan as a Subedar of the Mughal empire. He expressed his dying wish to his son Sur Singh that all those who were working against him should be punished. Sur Singh took an oath to fulfil his father's wish.

Thus the friendly relations which Kalyanmal had established with the Central Powers were further strengthened by Rai Singh not only by his loyalty and devotion but also by his wise counsel which raised him more and more in Akbar's estimation. Very soon he had been created a mansabdar of four

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as to be an examplary warning for all the imprudent(people).
But as his (Rai Singh's) representation, regarding this matter, had not been received in the court, it again struck to (our) glorious mind that it might, perhaps, turn out to be false. Therefore we deferred the despatch of the victorious armies.

If, in fact, this be happened, and that imprudent (Dalpat) be bent upon (mischief), he (Rai Singh) should, on the (very) day (he receives this Farman), despatch his representation, describing the facts (therein) so that we may despatch the armies from the exalted court, and order them to march on those frontiers to meet him, and to frustrate (take out his life out of him) his objects by inflicting a crushing defeat upon him.

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x x x x x
x

It is necessary that he (Rai Singh) should always be confident of the imperial favours to be inclined to his affairs."

1. Beveridge and Rogers, Op.cit. Vol. I, p.148
Beveridge, Akbarnama, Vol. III p.1200.

thousand[1] and begun to be regarded as a supporter of the Mughal power. In fact, he was the only Hindu ruler, excepting the rulers of Amer[2], who was granted such a high mansab, for the next lower mansab which a Hindu ruler[3] held was that of two thousand only. All the other Hindu princes were not only below him but juniors to him by a long way. Next junior to Rai Singh was Raja Ram Chand of Rewa who was a commander of two thousand and his position was 89th as against that of 44th of Rai Singh. Rao Sujan Singh of Bundi, also a commander of two thousand, was 96th in position, fifty-two places below Rai Singh; Udai Singh of Jodhpur was a commander of one thousand and 121st in position, and in the thirteenth grade of mansabdars. The Rawal of Jaisalmer, the ruler of Orchha and the Nawab of Palanpur were lower still and occupied the 181st, 204th and 217th positions respectively. Jahangir in his memoirs has described Rai Singh as "one of the most considerable Amirs"[4] and it was in consideration of this that during the celebration of the first festivities of his accession to the throne Rai Singh's mansab was raised to five thousand.

Raja Rai Singh fought in almost all the important battles for the Mughal rulers from Bengal to Kabul and Kashmir to Deccan

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1. Blochmann, Op.cit. Vol. I, p. 358. It may be added here that according to Elphinstone, mansabs of above five thousand were granted only to the Princes of Mughal imperial family. Rai Singh's mansab was raised to 5000 by Jahangir on his accession.
   Blochmann also mentions in Ain-i-Akbari, Vol. I, p.237 that "for this cause did His Majesty establish the rank of the Mansabdars from the Dahbashi (commander of ten) to Dah Hazari (commander of ten thousand) limiting, however, all commands above five thousand to his august sons."
2. The rulers of Amer had been given a special allowance in the matter due to their having been the first of the Hindu princes to offer allegiance to the Mughal throne.
3. Raja Ram Chand Baghela of Bandhu (now Rewa).
4. Beveridge and Rogers, Op.cit. Vol. I, pp.130-31

and Gujerat in which he amply demonstrated not only his courage but also his intrinsic gift of generalship. But, it was not only on the battle-field that Rai Singh achieved glory. As in war, so in peace; he always extended his fullest cooperation to the imperial government and came to be relied on as a faithful ally and sincere friend. It was owing to these qualities that Rai Singh was appointed governor on at least four different occasions. In 1581, he was appointed the governor of the Punjab,[1] and in 1586 of Burhanpur[2] in Khandesh. In 1593 he was sent to Surat[3] and in 1605-06 to Burhanpur for the second time.[4] The bestowal of these high offices of great responsibility demanding the greatest administrative skill not only shows how capable Rai Singh must have been but also go to prove that Akbar and Jahangir had a very high regard for him and reposed implicit faith in him, and considered him a well-wisher of the Mughal empire. This is amply borne out by the imperial farmans addressed to Rai Singh and the various grants of jagirs made to him from time to time. In a farman dated 22nd Isfarmuz, 40[5] (February 1595) Akbar complains that it had come to his notice that Rai Singh had till then not proceeded on the expedition of the Deccan and asked him what had become of his sincerity, ambition for work and friendship or had he succumbed to the insinuations of Bhatiani (the Maharani). The express use of the words friendship and ambition for work (خدمت و دوستی) as also the reference to Bhatiani are significant and the personal touch is indicative of the very cordial and friendly relations that subsisted between the two.

In the farman dated 29th Azar 42 (Nov. 1597) and addressed by Prince Salim to Rai Singh asking him to proceed to the assistance of Khan-i-Khanan, Rai Singh is addressed as "The choicest of the grandees of the Stable Empire, the leader of the nobles of the heaven resting realm, the best of the favourites of the Arsh-resembling (heaven-like) court, etc."

The great regard and concern that prince Salim had for Rai Singh is borne out by a farman addressed by him to Rai Singh when the latter had failed to write to him (prince Salim) for a long time. The farman dated 4th Azar Mah-e-Elahi, 47[6] (Nov. 1602)

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1. Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit. p.214
2. Powlett, Op.cit. p.27
3. Blochmann, Ain-i-Akbari, Vol. I, p.358
4. Powlett, Op.cit. p.30
5. Appendix I
6. Appendix II

goes on to say that though Rai Singh has not remembered the prince (Salim), he had thought of him on many an auspicious occasions. This proves beyond doubt the friendly terms that existed between the two.

The great influence that Rai Singh exercised at the court is furnished by an incident that occured at the time of Akbar's death. As has been noted, an intrigue was going on at court for installing Khusro on the throne. It was then that Jahangir looked upto Rai Singh and sought his assistance. The urgency and importance is manifest in the farman[1] dated 20th 29th Mihr, 50 Elahi sent by the prince to Rai Singh on the occasion. Rai Singh accordingly left for Agra immediately and managed the affairs of succession to the throne so skillfully that Jahangir was installed emperor without any hitch, frustrating the machinations of Raja Man Singh and Khan-i-Azam. The extent of trust reposed by Jahangir in Rai Singh is seen from the fact that he left Rai Singh incharge of Agra when he proceeded to subdue Khusro.

When Jahangir learnt that Rai Singh was being troubled by the rebellions of Dalpat Singh, the Rajkumar, he immediately sent a farman[2] dated Aban 2, Rajab-ul-Murajjab, 1015 A.H. (November 1607) to express his strong disapproval of the son's disgraceful conduct towards his father. The emperor had at first thought of sending an army to Rai Singh's assistance. But on second thoughts, he refrained from doing so as he had not heard from Rai Singh; and he thought the news might be wrong. He, however, added that if it was correct, Rai Singh should immediately inform the emperor and should rest assured of "the imperial favours to be inclined to his affairs."

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1. Appendix III
2. Appendix IV

Inspite of the best of relations, however, there were, as mentioned earlier, periods of temporary estrangement caused by the usual court cliques and machinations, but which were invariably passed over leading to a more firm friendship.

According to Ain-i-Akbari[1], the territories of the then Bikaner State were composed of the following Mahals:-

(i) Bikampur; (ii) Barsalpur; (iii) Bikaner; (iv) Jaisalmer; (v) Baharmel (Badhmer); (vi) Pokal (Pugal) (vii) Barkal (Parkar in Sind); (viii) Pokaran; (ix) Chautan; (x) Kotra; and (xi) Dewadar.

Besides, Merta, and Nagor were conferred upon Rai Singh by Akbar after his invasion of Marwar in 1561[2]. Even when Jodhpur which had been conferred on Rai Singh by Akbar, was later returned to Udai Singh in 1582, Nagor was retained by him.[3] It

1. Jarett; Ain-i-Akbari, Vol. II, pp.277-78

2. Tod, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.1133.
Powlett in his Gazetteer of the Bikaner State (p.25) also confirms that during the reign of Rai Singh, Nagor formed a part of his territories. Akbar's farman dated the 15th October 1600, preserved in the Rajasthan Government State Archives, Bikaner, confirms the conferring of the Mahals of the Sarkar of Nagor upon Rai Singh; "the trusted of the empire, the pillar of the exalted realm, deserving of kindness, consideration and obligation." It also directs the revenue officers to hand over these Mahals to Rai Singh's agents and the Chaudharis, the revenue collectors, the cultivators and others to pay the revenue demands, taxes etc. to Rai Singh's agents and recognise Rai Singh as their Sire or Raja. The disparity in the dates of the grant, however, is confusing. Dr. Tessitori is of the opinion that Rai Singh undoubtedly captured Nagor in 1561 but as he was acting on behalf of the Mughals, the Mahal probably remained with them and was only granted to Rai Singh in about 1573 after Rai Singh's meritorious services in the Gujerat wars and that Akbar's farman of October 1600 is in the nature of a confirmatory order.

3. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 27

was only later that it was returned to Jodhpur in a result of inter-state settlements. The pargana of Nadiad (Niryad) was granted by an imperial farman dated 5th Urdi Bihisht 41 (April 1596)[1] in exchange of the parganas of Tahara, Qasur and Atgarh that were held by him. The jagir of Junagarh was restored to him under a farman dated the 9th of Dai, 42[2] (February, 1597) and the district of Shamsabad including the sub-district of Nurpur by a farman dated the 21st Khurdad Elahi 49,[3] (May 1604). Rai Singh is mentioned by Powlett as having held a few villages of Jodhpur (Phalodi) and Sirsa, Hansi and Hissar[4]. That Maroth near Multan formed a part of Rai Singh's territories is mentioned by Powlett[5] and the grant of Dipalpur Lakhi is apparent from a farman dated 15th of Rajab, 993 A.H.(April 1585)[6].

These imperial grants of territories while undoubtedly expressing appreciation by the Central Powers of the eminent services rendered, they were also intended to defray the expenses of the large army that Rai Singh was to maintain and which according to Ain-i-Akbari consisted of 12,000 cavalry and fifty thousand infantry[7]. Such a big army, [illegible] in the conditions then prevailing, would not have been allowed unless the emperor had implicit trust in his feudatory. It gives a clear idea of the importance and the exalted position held by Rai Singh and his dominant influence in inter-state affairs, and also the strength of the Bikaner State.

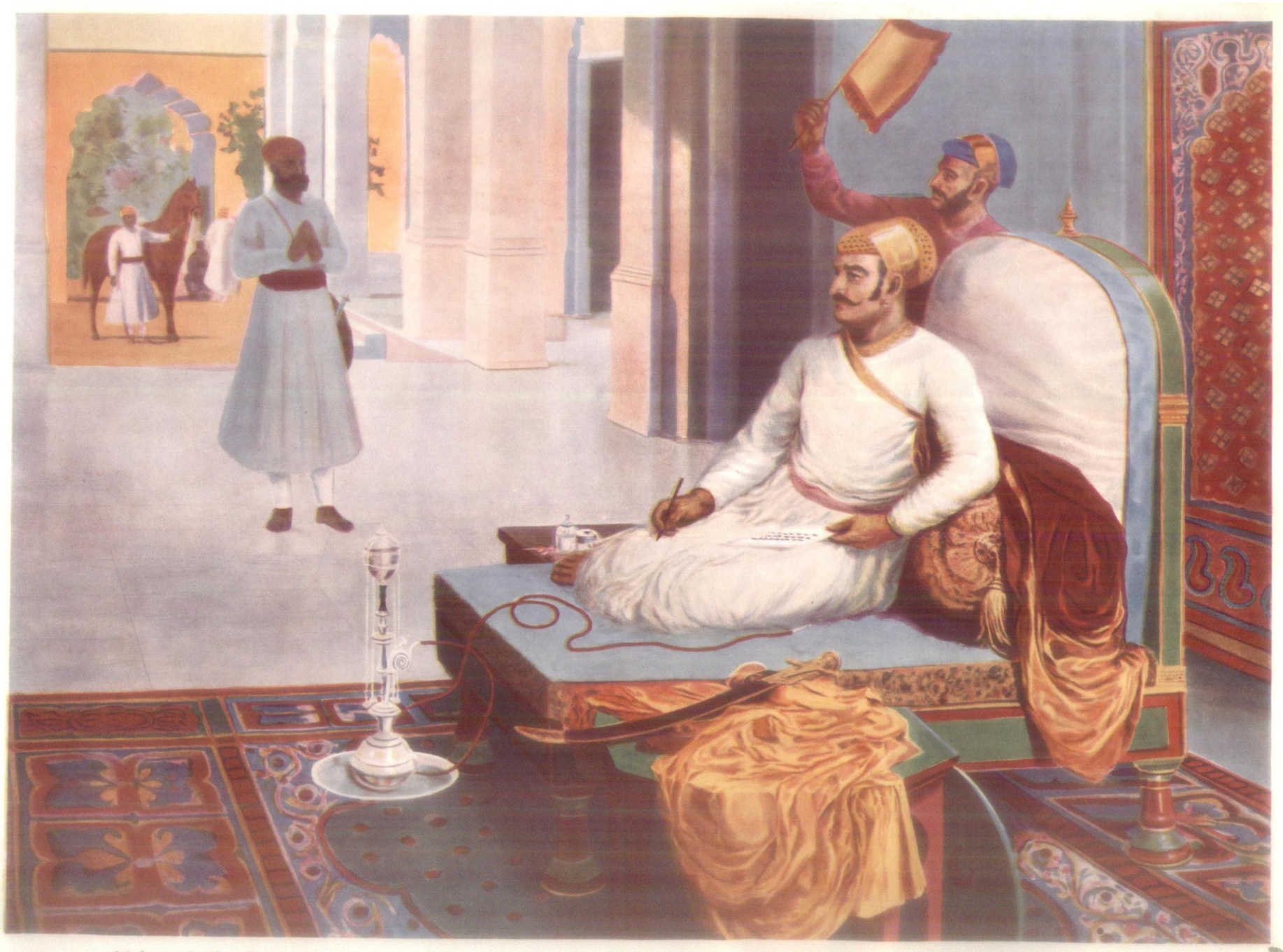
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1. Appendix V
2. Appendix VI
3. Appendix VII
4. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 25.
5. Ibid.
6. Akbar's farman dated 15th of Rajab 993 A.H.(April 1585) in my possession, confers the pargana of Bhatner in the district of Hissar Firoza on Rai Singh in exchange of Lakhipur in Dipalpur.
7. Jarrett; Ain-i-Akbari, Vol. II, p. 277

The rich booty made in the imperial campaigns, the efficiency of the internal administration and the rapid growth of trade and commerce led to unprecedented wealth and prosperity of Bikaner. The increased wealth gave an impetus to cultural and literary activities of which Rai Singh himself was the most fervent patron. Scores of poets flocked to his court and his praises were sung while his munificence was a favourite theme for poetical composition. The songs in honour of Rai Singh are numbered by the hundred, and no ruler of Bikaner ever had so many panegyrists. On the occasion of his marriages at Udaipur and Jaisalmer, he is said to have given away large amounts of money as reward to Charans and others for the odes they composed in his praise. He was a patron of many a poet and Khyat writer who lived on his bounty. Being himself a scholar of Sanskrit and a poet of high order, he could appreicate merits in others. It was in his time that several scholars wrote commentaries on a number of important Sanskrit texts. He himself is reported to have been the author of two important works on astrology under the title 'Jyotish Ratnamala'.

The members of the House of Bikaner did not lag behind in extending their cooperation for the cause of the Mughal empire. The meritorious services rendered by Shrang, an uncle of Rai Singh, in Kashmir operations in which he and his handful of brave followers "yielded up their short lives and reaped eternal renown"[1] have already been mentioned. The part played by Ram Singh, brother of Rai Singh, in the Gujerat war has also been referred to. When in 1573 Rai Singh was given an important command in the second Gujerat war, Prithvi Raj, one of his younger brothers, was also with the Bikaner contingent.[2] According to Alakhdhari, Prithviraj was in command

1. Beveridge, Akbarnama, Vol. III, p.797
2. Alakhdhari, Raja Rai Singh, p.150



Maharaj Prithvi Rajji writing his famous letter to the Maharana Pratap Singhji on his rumoured submission to the Emperor Akbar.

PLATE VII

of a field unit during the Kabul expedition and his valiant services there were rewarded by the emperor (Akbar) by the grant of the fief of Gagron[1]. Besides being a renowned soldier, Prithviraj was also a great poet and his poem "Vel Krishna Rukmani ri" has become immortal.

The incident which has earned fame for him over the length and breadth of India is the inspiration which he gave Rana Pratap in one of the moments of his deepest depression. The Rana had for long been trying to maintain his independence against the ruthless attacks of the vastly superior forces of Akbar. His resources had not only been greatly diminished in the unequal struggle but also a time came when the Rana had even to suffer the pangs of starvation and could not bear the sight of his children's agony. He was almost unnerved once and the Mughal commander sent a note to Akbar in which he hinted that the Rana was on the point of surrender. Akbar in his exultation showed the note to Prithviraj who said that the letter could not be true and obtained the emperor's permission to ascertain the truth. Accordingly he wrote to the Rana the following couplet:-

पातल जो पतशाह, बोले मुख हूं तो बयरा ।
सिहर पछिम दिस मांह, ऊगे कासप राव उत ॥
मटकूं मूंछां पाण, के पटकूं निज तन करद ।
दीजै लिख दीवाण, इण दो महिली बात इक ॥

Translated, they mean, "If Patal (Prithviraj) himself happens to call (Akbar) Padshah, the Sun would rise in the West. Shall I twirl my moustaches (in pride), or should I kill myself with my own sword (in shame)? Write, O Diwan! (Pratap) one of the two alternatives."

The exhortation moved Rana Pratap and steeled him in his determination to hold out against the emperor so long as

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1. Alakhdhari, Op.cit. p.151



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PLATE VIII Maharana Pratap writing in reply to Maharaj Prithviraj

he lived. He replied as follows:-

"तुरक कहासी मुख पतौ, इण तन सूं इकलिंग।
ऊगै जांही ऊगसी, प्राची बीच पतंग ॥
खुसी हूंत पीथल कमध, पटको मूंछां पाण।
पछटण है जेतै पतौ, कलमां सिर के वाण ॥
---"

It means that as long as this body exists, by the grace of Ekling (the presiding deity of the house of Udaipur - the Shiva) Pratap shall call the emperor by no other name than Turk. The sun shall continue to rise in the east where it always rises. Gladly therefore Pithal (Prithviraj) twist your moustaches in pride. The sword of Pratap shall always smite at the heads of the Muslims even when he will be bearing the thrust of their spears in his head.

None other than Prithviraj could have dated to act like this and the incidence is an evidence of his independence of character. Prithviraj is perhaps the only Rajput prince who finds a place in the compositions of Akbar, who in a moment of dejection, said -

पीथल सो मजलिस गई, तानसेन सो राग।
हंसबो, रमिबो, बोलिबो, गयो बीरबल साथ ॥

"With Peethal has gone the Majlis;
With Tansen, the music;
With the death of Birbal departed laughter,
gaiety and the pleasures of conversation."

Kishan Singh, the fourth son of Rai Singh, was the right-hand man and the commander of the military forces of prince Khurram when he quarrelled with his father and obtained possession of Bengal. In 1609 he along with Mahabat Khan, commanded the forces sent by Jahangir against the Rana of Udaipur and it was in recognition of his gallant services on the occasion that he was promoted to the rank of a mansabdar of three thousand. Kishan Singh also took part in the pursuit and defeat of prince Khusro when he rebelled against the emperor. Jahangir raised his mansab to 4500 in 1615.[1]

1. Alakhdhari, Op.cit. pp.159-60

CHAPTER IV

Rai Singh's successors and the Central Powers.

Dalpat Singh who succeeded his father Rai Singh in 1612, was born on January 24, 1565 (8th Phalgun, V.S.1621). He had incurred his father's displeasure and as planned by his father his claim was to be set aside and his younger brother, Sur Singh, was to have succeeded to the throne. However, since the death of Maharaja Rai Singh had occurred in the Deccan and while Dalpat Singh was in Bikaner, he being the eldest son, ascended the gaddi unopposed, and went to Delhi to pay his homage to the emperor who conferred upon him the title of Rai and bestowed the Khilat. Sur Singh also presented himself at the emperor's court and submitted his claim to the gaddi of Bikaner on the strength of his father having already placed Raj Tilak on his forehead. The emperor was annoyed and said that in that case he would put ~~put~~ the Tilak on Dalpat Singh's forehead with his own hand and in confirmation of his decision and after actually putting the Raj Tilak on Dalpat Singh's forehead, he conferred upon him his ancestral kingdom.[1]

In August 1612, the emperor ordered Rai Dalpat Singh to accompany Mirza Rustam to Thatta of which place the latter had been appointed Hakim and raised Dalpat Singh's mansab to two thousand.[2] But Dalpat Singh, instead of proceeding to Thatta, went to Bikaner[3] and thus incurred the displeasure of the emperor. Reaching Bikaner, he created ill will among the Bhatis by ordering the construction of a fort in the desert at a place called Churehar (near the present Anupgarh) with the intention of keeping Bhatis under stricter control. The Bhati Thakur of Kharbara, aided by a force of about three thousand men, prevented the project by having the foundation filled up as soon as it was dug. On the 1st November, 1612

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1. Beveridge and Rogers, Op.cit. Vol.I, pp. 217-18
   Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit. p.194
   Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi) pp.361-62
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.488
   Devi Prasad, Jahangirnama, p.152
2. Brajratan Das, Op.cit.(Hindi) p. 362
   Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit. p. 194.
3. Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit. p. 194

the Bhatis even removed the Thana that had been established there.[1]

Falling a victim to the wrong advice of his favourite minister, Purohit Man Mahesh, Dalpat Singh resumed all the jagir lands except Phalodi, of his brother Sur Singh.[2] Thereupon Sur Singh sent Purohit Laxmi Das, his representative, to Delhi.[3] After some time, while accompanying his mother to pilgrimage to Soron, Sur Singh met the Kachhawa Raja Man Singh at Sanganer where he made a halt en-route, and then proceeded to Soron where he received the summons of the emperor to present himself at the Delhi court. At Delhi the emperor ordered that Sur Singh should occupy the gaddi as ruler of Bikaner and that Zia-ud-Din should at once lead an army and carry out the depossession of ~~Maharaja~~ Dalpat Singh.[4]

Dalpat came out to Chhapar with a strong army to oppose Zia-ud-Din who could not withstand the virulent attack of Dalpat Singh, and therefore made a hurried retreat to await reinforcements for which he sent an urgent call. In the meantime Sur Singh sent out his agents to collect to his support the innumerable sardars who had suffered at the hands of Dalpat. Only Thakursi Jiwandasot, who was Dalpat's governor at Bhatner, remained true to his master. He produced a force of three thousand fighting men. With these men and a number of others whose fidelity was of doubtful character, Dalpat Singh came out to fight Zia-ud-Din for the second time. Dalpat Singh was seated on an elephant and behind him sat Bhim Singh Balbhadrot, the Thakur of Churu, who bore Dalpat Singh no good-will and was secretly in league with the latter's enemies. The moment the clash between the opposing armies commenced, Bhim Singh seized Dalpat Singh from behind and made

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.141.
2. Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.489.
   Maharaja Rai Singh had, during his lifetime, bestowed 84 villages along with Phalodi upon Sur Singh.
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.142-43
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.489
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 31
4. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p. 144
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.489.

him over to a party which carried him to Hissar, whence he was sent to Ajmer as prisoner.[1]

The Khyats relate that while Dalpat Singh was lodged as a prisoner in an old place guarded vigilantly by a hundred armed men, Thakur Hathi Singh Champawat Gopaldasot of Harsolao, a jagirdar of Mewar, while on his way to visit his wife's family, happened to pass through Ajmer and halted in the vicinity of the prison. Dalpat Singh seeing the camp through the barred window of his prison made enquiries and expressed a desire to see the Thakur. But the latter replied that he would meet him on his way back. Dalpat Singh remarked sarcastically that free men travelling out to meet their relatives could find no time to meet one who was a prisoner. On hearing this the Thakur's Rajput pride was touched to the quick, and he at once called his retinue and told them that as Rathores they could wish for no better glory than to die fighting for the rescue of another Rathore who was held prisoner by his enemy. Thereupon they all put on saffron clothes and rushed to the prison house and overpowered the guard, set Dalpat Singh free and took to their horses. But the Subedar of Ajmer soon started in pursuit and with his four thousand troops surrounded the Thakur's handful of men all of whom, true to their oath, died fighting desperately against overwhelming odds. Dalpat was among the killed and thus died the successor of Rai Singh, who was more brave than wise. Six of his Ranis who were

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1. Powlett, Op.cit. pp. 31-32
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp. 144-46
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp. 489-90

in Bhatner became Satis on hearing of the death of their husband.[1]

Sur Singh, who was born on the 28th November, 1594, thus succeeded to the gaddi of Bikaner in the year 1613[2] and immediately afterwards went to Delhi to pay homage to emperor Jahangir who raised his mansab.[3]

At Delhi, he met the members of the family of the late Karam Chand Bachhawat, a former minister of the Bikaner State and persuaded them to return to Bikaner. He appointed Lakshmi Chand, the late Karamchand's son, as his Diwan. Inspite of the fact that Karamchand had at the time of his death warned his sons never to go back to Bikaner, both Lakshmi Chand and his brother Bagh Chand swallowed the bait Sur Singh offered to them in his attempt to fulfil the promise he had made to his dying father, namely, that of avenging and destroying all his enemies. Two months after their return to Bikaner, Lakshmi Chand and the members of his family found themselves surrounded by about four thousand troops. Although Banias by descent,

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.146-48
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.490-91
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 32

   There is a different version of this in the Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri (vol. I, pp.258-59). According to it the emperor learnt on the 11th August, 1613 of the defeat of Dalpat Singh at the hands of Sur Singh who had been deputed to remove him. Later on Dalpat Singh started trouble in the Sarkar of Hissar whereupon Hashim of Khost and other jagirdars made him a prisoner and sent him to the court (Delhi). Since he had already incurred great displeasure of the emperor by his lawless activities, he was ordered to be executed and Sur Singh's mansab was raised by five hundred in recognition of his services.

   This version is also supported by Umrai-Hanud, p.194

2. Dayal Das, Op.cit, Vol. II, p.149
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 32.
   Nainsi, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.199

3. Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.491.

these Bachhawats resolved to die fighting rather than be captured and tortured. Consequently, after grinding to dust all the precious stones and jewellery, they possessed, and having also killed all their women-folk, the Bachhawats together with their five hundred Rajput retainers fell upon the Bikaner forces and died to a man. Only one boy of the family, who at the time was away, visiting his mother's parents escaped death. But he never returned to Bikaner and made his home at Udaipur where his descendants are still living.[1]

In 1614, Raghunath, the Rathore, Sudarshan, Gokal Das, Bhagwan, Qawi, the Afghan and Hussain the Kyamkhani began to oppress the cultivators of Narwar and took possession of fifty-two villages of their territory, had realised twenty-four lacs of Dam and were bent on plundering and killing the people. When complaints reached the emperor, he deputed Maharaja Sur Singh to enquire and inflict heavy punishment on the culprits if the reports were found true[2]. Meanwhile the rebels became so bold as to loot the imperial treasury. They

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.152-53.
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.491-92.

2. Jahangir's farman dated 1st Khwardad, 9 -
   "The chosen of the peers and equals and worthy of imperial favours, Rai Suraj Singh, being distinguished by and hoping for the royal regards, should know, that a large number of the tenants and cultivators of the Pargana of Narmar, having come to the court, the asylum of the world, complained and called for justice (alleging) that Raghunath, the Rathore, Sudarshan, Gokal Das, Bhagwan, Qawi, the Afghan and Hussain, the Qiyam Khani, have taken possession of fifty-two villages of their territory, and have realised twenty-four lacs of 'Dam' and are after plundering and killing those people."

   x x x

   "..... he should inflict severe punishment and chastisement on those tyrant rebels, and should restore these villages and the misappropriated products thereof to the (original) owners, after recovering (the villages etc.) from them (the rebels)."

also looted the residents of Loonia. Thereupon the Emperor deputed Hashim Beg Chisti to subdue them and Sur Singh was also deputed to assist him.[1]

In the same year Jahangir wrote to Sur Singh also to arrest, capture or slaughter Chandrabhan, thief, rebel and robber, who was reported to have entered the Bikaner territory after having been severely chastised by Keshu Biloch.[2]

In Jaunary 1615, Sur Singh was summoned to the imperial court[3] and in 1622 he was with Darab Khan in the battle of

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1. Jahangir's farman dated 5th Amardad, 9 -
"The chosen of the peers and grandees, worthy of imperial favours, Rai Suraj Singh, being comforted by and hoping for royal graces, should know, that it has so reached (our) ears of dignity and glory, that Gokul, Sudarshan, Raghunath and a number of other rebellious and seditious Kanwars, have realised a sum of Rs.30,000/-, that belonged to the exalted imperial estate, from Dalpat, the accursed, and after seizing the property and belongings of the inhabitants of the pargana Lunia and its environs, with great force and extortion, have depopulated their villages.

x x x x x x x

"..... he (Suraj Singh working in perfect concord with him, should recover the imperial money and the dues of the people from them, and should expel them (from the territory) having chastised and punished those wretched (people) in such a way as to serve an exemplary warning to all the rebels and insurgents, so that the people being safe and secure against their further encroachments and disturbances should attend to the affairs of agriculture and habitation in comfort and confidence."

2. Jahangir's farman dated 31 Amardad, ..9

3. Jahangir's farman dated 9th Bahman Mahe-Elahi, 9.
"

x x x x

It is necessary that when the above mentioned (Har Ram) reaches there, and he (Suraj Singh) receives the knowledge of the contents of Jahangir's sublime order, worthy of being obeyed, he should proceed towards the steps of the Arsh-like throne, and should exalt himself with the honour of attendance and kissing the ground.

x x x x"

Kirkee where he displayed great valour and devotion to the cause of the empire, which received due commendation from the emperor.[1] He was appointed to the Thana of Jalnapur near Amer in 1622[2] and in 1623, Jahangir conferred a winter Khilat (robe of honour) upon him.[3]

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1. Jahangir's farman dated 28th Urdi Bihisht, 16-
"The pride of the contemporaneous ~~sp~~ peers and worthy of of favours and obligations, Rai Suraj Singh, being honoured and distinguished by the imperial regards and respect, should acknowledge that in these days with victory in the wake, the happy news of the victory of Khirki (a place somewhere near Bombay), achieved by the help of the Divine Grace, the auspicious regards of the slaves of His Majesty (i.e. His Majesty himself) the asylum of the Caliphate, the shadow of God, the daily-increasing imperial glory and by the efforts of the devoted, experienced and diligent servants, has been brought to the sacred and exalted notice of (His Majesty) from the despatches of the essence of the faithful, the devoted, the pick of the faithful friends of the State and the pillar of the empire, Darab Khan, and from the journal of the transactions of the forces."

"Bravo for that x pride of the x peers (Rai x Suraj Singh), and may the Divine blessings be upon him, in that he has done all what was necessary for his heroism, fidelity, exertion and devotion. God willing, after the completion of the illustrious victory he would be elevated by various kinds of excellences."

x x

2. Jahangir's farman dated 6th Zee-Quada ....1031.

x x x x x

"The exalted and eminent order has (now) received the honour of being issued (to the effect) that, whereas he has been appointed to serve in the Thana of Jalnapur, that is near to Amber, his leaving that place is not advisable.
And we, with dignity and glory, have despatched a note to that effect to the slaves of His Majesty with Soloman's dignity, the asylum of Caliphate, and in the near future another order, obeyed by the world, would be issued in reply to our despatch, that the said choice of the peers (Rai Sur Singh) remain as usual in charge of that thana."

3. Jahangir's farman dated 26th Isfandarmuz Elahi, 18 -
"The pride of the peers and equals, worthy of regards and obligation, Raja Suraj Singh, being distinguished by and hopeful for the excessive imperial boons, should acknowledge that as a token of great condescension we are (pleased) to send, for his elevation and honour, a winter Khilat (robe) per Muttalib."

On another occasion when a complaint was received about the atrocities of the Johiyas and others who had raided Sirsa, murdered Rai Jallu its chief and others, expelled the inhabitants of some twelve villages and looted their belongings and cattle, the emperor deputed Sur Singh to punish the rebels and have the looted property restored to the owners.[1]

When Khurram revolted against his father and started fomenting trouble in the Deccan in 1622, Jahangir asked Sur Singh to proceed to the Deccan to lead the army against Khurram.[2] Sur Singh fought many engagements against Khurram and dealt many effective blows to the prince's army so that its resistance was crushed and the emperor's supremacy restored in this distant part of the empire.[3] Khurram, however,

1. Jahangir's farman dated 17 Tir Elahi, 18 -
"The chosen of the contemporaneous peers and equals, worthy of regards and obligation, Raja Sur, being consoled by and hoping for the imperial condescensions, should acknowledge that Behzad and Allauddin, when coming from Sirsa, lodged a complaint in the court, (alleging) that Askaran, Keshodas and others of the Kandlot and Joya clans of the pargana of Bhatner, had raided their villages, and having murdered Rai Jallu and others, and expelled the inhabitants of some twelve villages, had looted the belongings and cattle of the said villages.
If it be a fact, (then)it is necessary, that he (Raja Sur) should punish and oblige them to restore whatever property they have looted, to the owners. He should not allow anybody to tyrannize over them."

2. Jahangir's farman dated 24th Khurdad, Elahi, 19 -
" x x x
Whereas, the whole of the exalted will and intention is bent upon uprooting that unfortunate, it is necessary that he (Surat Singh), with other faithful servants, should do his best in repelling and removing that ungrateful and unfortunate, and thus, should once more look honourable before the auspicious and exalted eye (of His Majesty)".

3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.153-54
Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.492-93.

did not bear any grudge against Sur Singh as subsequent history will show. This incident is not mentioned in any Persian history but is referred to by Ojha and is supported by Jahangir's farmans dated 24th Khurdad Elahi, 19[1] and 14th Aban Elahi, 19,[2] in the possession of the present author. For these services, Jahangir honoured Sur Singh with the present of a steed and a Khilat.[3]

Again on the death of Malik Ambar in 1626 Jahangir sent a farman[4] to Sur Singh to avail himself of the opportunity of subduing Khurram. In the same year, when Jahangir wanted to send a suitable man to Multan for the governance of that part of the empire, Sur Singh was considered the appropriate choice and was summoned to Delhi for being elevated and sent to Multan as it was contiguous to his territories.[5] In the same year, Sur

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1. Jahangir's farman dated 24th Khurdad Elahi, 19. See footnote No. 2 on page 90.
2. Jahangir's farman, dated 14th Aban Elahi, 19 -
   "The pick of the contemporaneous peers and worthy of favours and obligation, Rai Suraj Singh, being distinguished by, and hopeful for the imperial regards, should acknowledge that the facts about the war with, and the defeat and flight of the unfortunate, and about the efforts and sacrifices made by the servants of the court, have been brought to the sacred notice, ..."
3. Jahangir's farman dated 14th Aban Elahi, 19.
   x x x
   "We are sending the horse and Khilat (robe of honour) per Raja Zorawan for his elevation."
   x x x
4. Jahangir's farman dated 27th Khurdad Elahi, 21 -
   "The select of the compeers and equals and deserving the condescensions and obligation, Rai Surat Singh, being distinguished by and hopeful for the imperial favours, should know that it has just been brought to the sacred notice that Ambar has died, and a favourable opportunity presented itself.
   We issue order (therefore) that as it is the time (for the display) of fidelity, he should, in consonance with other attendants, try his utmost, in uprooting and extirpating the unfortunate, and should regard this as a means of promotion in his rank."
5. Jahangir's farman dated 11th Amardad, 21 -
   "The chosen of the contemporaneous peers and equals, worthy of regards and obligation, Rai Surat Singh, being distinguished by, and hoping for the imperial favours, should know, that as there was no such person at Multan who could have satisfied (our) mind, and as his home is near Multan therefore, as a token of favour, we order him to proceed

....contd. next page.

Singh was deputed to Burhanpur because as Jahangir himself observed in a farman[1] that the presence of such a devotee was necessary in that province. Sur Singh, it seems, had returned to Bikaner and summons had to be repeated.[2]

The parganas of Nagor and others were conferred upon Sur Singh by Jahangir in 1627 and instructions were issued to the revenue officers accordingly[3].

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to the exalted court on the (very) day he is informed of the contents of this dignified order, in such an expedition that he should neither take water there, nor should even go to his own house."

1. Jahangir's farman dated 27th Mihir, 21 -
"The pick of the peers and equals, worthy of regards and obligation, Rai Surat Singh, being distinguished by and hoping for the imperial favours, should know, that whereas we deputed Mahabat Khan to Thatta against the unfortunate we order the choice of the peers (Surat Singh) that on the (very) day he is informed of the contents of this favour-marked exalted mandate, he should without the least delay and hesitation, leave the place, wherever he might be (at that time), and proceed to Burhanpur; because the presence of such devotees (as Surat Singh) is essentially required in that province."
2. Jahangir's farman dated 14th Azar, 21.
3. Jahangir's farman dated 16th Mihir, 22.
"The exalted and auspicious mandate has just now received the honour of being issued and the dignity of being passed that the pargana of Nagor and other places as specified in the endorsement, be conferred and confirmed as jagir upon Rao Suraj Singh, the choice of the peers and equals, from the beginning of the Kharif (autumn crop) of Tushquan-il, on the dismissal of Amar Singh.
The comptrollers of the Diwani affairs, and those in charge of the imperial duties and functions in obedience to the exalted, sacred and dignified (royal) orders, should commit the above Mahals to the charge of the above mentioned (Surat Singh) and should regard it safe and secure from the admixture of change or alteration.
The injunction to the Chaudharis, the Kanungos, the Headmen, the ryot and the cultivators of that Mahal, is that giving him all accounts of the revenues and other civil obligations, crop to crop and year to year, they should not retain or withhold anything from him.
They should follow this order in every way. They should not evade or oppose this order and should regard it as their duty."

When Jahangir died suddenly at Bhimher on the 28th October, 1627, while on his way back from Kashmir, Prince Khurram immediately proclaimed himself his successor. Although during the later years of Jahangir's reign, Queen Nur Jahan had started intrigues against Khurram, the latter was, however, able to discover and overcome her machinations. Being the eldest son of the emperor, Khurram had the best claim to the throne. His able friends and his influential father-in-law were of great help to him and the sudden death of Jahangir so far away from the capital, gave him excellent opportunity to occupy the throne. On becoming emperor under the title Shah Jahan, he won the goodwill of the nobles and officials of the empire by making liberal gifts and on this occasion Sur Singh was one of the recipients. His mansab, which during the reign of Jahangir had been raised to three thousand personal and two thousand horse[1] was raised by Shah Jahan to four thousand personal and two thousand five hundred horse. He was also presented with a Khilat (robe of honour), an elephant, a steed, a jewelled scimitar, a kettle and a nishan (flag).[2] And in November the same year, the fort of Maroth was granted to him as jagir.[3]

I have also a farman in my possession to show that Dawar Bux ascended the throne of Delhi and sent his compliments to Sur Singh.[4]

Soon after Sur Singh was sent to Kabul when Nazar Mohammad Khan, the brother of Imam Kuli Khan of Bokhara invaded

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1. Brajratan Das, Op.cit.(Hindi), p.456
2. Devi Prasad, Shahjahannama, Vol. I, p.9
   Abdul Hamid Lahori, Badshahnama, Vol. I, p.120
3. Jahangir's farman dated 2nd Rabi-us-Sani, 1037 A.H.
4. Dawar Bux's farman dated 20th Aban, 22.-
   " The pick of the peers and equals, worthy of regard and obligation, Rai Suraj Singh, being distinguished by and hopeful for the imperial favours should know that whereas the aspiring soul (of His Majesty) soaring up at the call of "Return the (O' Soul) to thy Lord happily and willingly," (a quotation from the Quran), has taken its abode in the neighbourhood of the Beneficent king (God); (His Majesty

...contd. next page.

Kabul and laid siege to the fort. On receipt of the intelligence, Shah Jahan ordered Sur Singh, Rao Ratan Hada, Mirza Raja Jai Singh, Mahabat Khan, Khan-i-Khanan and Motmid Khan to lead an army for the relief of Kabul. On this occasion he was the recipient of the honour of kettle-drum from the emperor.[1] But before their twenty thousand horses reached Kabul, the enemy had been repulsed by Lashkar Khan, the Subedar of Kabul. Sur Singh and Mahabat Khan were recalled.[2]

Sur Singh was next asked to march against Orchha. Jujhar Singh Bundela, the ruler of Orchha, had gone to pay his respects to Shah Jahan when he ascended the throne but returned to his State without seeking the emperor's permission and began to make preparations for a rebellion. Amongst the many officers who were deputed to lead the punitive expedition against Jujhar Singh, Sur Singh was one. Jujhar Singh being unable to withstand the imperial forces, sued for peace and

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has died) therefore, ... Her Majesty Noorjahan Begum, and other members of the State and the nobles of the court, thought it proper that the lamp of the family of Sahib Qiran (Timur) be lighted by the beneficent, exalted, holy and auspicious personality of ourself."

"We have issued worth-obeying order to all the devoted servants, (to the effect) that thanking (God) for this great favour, and doing their utmost in faithfulness, service and sincerity, they should with full hope, be discharging the duties entrusted to them, zealously, and should always be despatching the news about their respective places to the royal court.

We have also given some verbal orders about (certain) matters to his (Suraj Singh's) agents, and regarding them as if from our own tongue he should act accordingly."

1. Abdul Hamid Lahori, Badshahnama, Vol. I, p.212

2. Devi Prasad, Shahjahannama, Vol. I, pp.15-18
   Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi), p.456
   Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit., p. 257

offered an apology to the emperor[1].

In 1629, Sur Singh was ordered to accompnay a punitive expedition sent out to punish Khan Jahan Lodi, a mansabdar of the Mughal court and who had suddenly left Agra without permission, supposedly with evil intent. He was overtaken at Dholpur by the royal army. Khan Jahan offered resistance but finally made good his escape and found his way to Nizam-ul-Mulk (Sultan of Ahmednagar). Sur Singh and other officers were recalled.[2] In 1630 Sur Singh was again sent together with other military commanders against Khan Jahan Lodi who had taken refuge in Rajori. On this occasion the Mansab of Sur Singh was raised to 4000 zat and 3000 sowar.[3] Khan Jahan put up a stout fight but ultimately fled. A section of the victorious army indulged in looting Rajori, but a major part of it led by Sur Singh pursued the fugitive Khan Jahan and overtook him. Driven to bay, Khan Jahan fought back desperately and finding an opportune moment during the fight made good his escape beyond the boundaries of the Mughal empire.[4]

It may be recalled that when Sur Singh pleaded his claim to the gaddi of Bikaner on the death of Rai Singh, Jahangir rejected the claim and put the Raj Tilak on the forehead of Dalpat Singh. But later, owing to the atrocities perpetuated by Dalpat Singh, the emperor favoured Sur Singh and conferred the gaddi on him. Gradually he retrieved much of the prestige of Bikaner at the Mughal court which Rai Singh had built up and which Dalpat Singh had undermined. There are

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1. Devi Prasad, Shahjahannama, Vol. I, pp.15-20
   Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi), p.456
2. Devi Prasad, Op.cit. Vol. I, pp. 23-26
   Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi) p.456
3. Abdul Hamid Lahori, Badshahnama, Vol. I, p.296
4. Devi Prasad, Op.cit. Vol. I, pp.27-40

nearly fifty-one farmans issued by Shah Jahan and Jahangir to Sur Singh and bear testimony to his rise in royal favour as a trusted counsellor and loyal defender of the empire. That Sur Singh was recognised by both Jahangir and Shah Jahan as one of their most devoted supporters is evident from the numerous missions, both military and diplomatic, on which he was deputed. The farman deputing him to Burhanpur expressly mentions that the presence of such a devoted person was specially required in that province. Sur Singh was being considered the best choice for being sent to Multan is a proof of his diplomatic acumen which received due recognition from the emperors. The various military missions on which he was sent are proof of his pre-eminence as a commander. That he was selected to participate in the campaign against Khurram when he revolted against his father is indeed an instance which shows the high trust that was reposed in him by Jahangir. And yet we find that Khurram when he ascended the throne also took him as one of his trusted supporters. Sur Singh by his meticulous conduct had so well established himself in the estimation of Shah Jahan that the latter deputed him to punish the mal-contents who were not reconciled to his accession. Two of Jahangir's farmans[1] are of particular interest as in them he sends his Ram Ram (compliments) to Sur

1. Jahangir's farman dated 8th Mihir,

"The choice of the peers, the best of the nobles, the quintessence of the equals, the pride of his brothers, Rao Suraj Singh; May he receive Ram Ram (our best compliments)"

Marginal postscript -

"Raoji should receive our Ram Ram (compliments). Whatever was the essential of love has been done; and there shall be no curtailment in doing what is possible. He should compose his noble mind in all respect, and should regard our kindness in his favour to be in the highest pitch. What more should be stated?"

Jahangir's Farman dated 22nd Azar -

"May Raoji receive (our) Ram Ram (or compliments). He should in accordance with what is written proceed thither with full hope and energy, and nothing shall be spared in (showing) various degrees of love (to him). His great undertakings would be fulfilled in the near future. What more should be written! The remaining facts would be told to him through the vakils verbally. A private robe of honour has also been conferred upon him."

Sur Singh which show the high honour with which Sur Singh was held. The attitude of Sur Singh towards the Central Power was that of loyalty to the de facto ruler. This fact is also borne out from a farman of Dawar Baksh when he occupied the throne for a short period.

Sur Singh died at Bohri village in Burhanpur (Deccan) on the 15th September 1631 while in the service of the emperor.[1]

Karan Singh who ascended[2] the throne on October 13, 1631 in succession to Sur Singh, was born on the 6th of Shrawan, V.S. 1673 (30th January, 1616). He was the great grandson of the famous Raja Man Singh of Amer. Soon after his accession, Karan Singh repaired to the court of Shah Jahan who granted the mansab of two thousand personal and fifteen hundred horse.[3] Karan Singh's brother Shatrusal was also granted the mansab of five hundred personal and two hundred horse.[4] In 1631, Karan Singh presented an elephant to the emperor.[5]

The very next year, in 1632, Karan Singh had to join a Mughal expedition to the Deccan. After the death of Malik Ambar, his son Fateh Khan held his father's office. Nizam Shah II, the ruler of Ahmednagar, however, did not trust Fateh Khan and imprisoned him in the fort of Daulatabad. Later, on being released from prison by the influence of his sister who was the wife of Nizam Shah II and coming to his own, Fateh Khan managed to imprison Nizam Shah II and accepted the over-lordship of Shah Jahan. The emperor desired Nizam Shah II to be killed and he was accordingly poisoned and Hussain, a boy of ten, was put on the throne. Shah Jahan then ordered him to

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1. Devi Prasad, Shahjahannama, Vol. I, p.61
   Samal Das, Vir Vinod, Vol. II, p.493
   Inscription on the cenotaph.
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.161
3. Devi Prasad, Shahjahannama, Vol. I, 61.
   Abdul Hamid Lahor, Badshahnama, Vol. I, p.398
4. Ibid.
5. Devi Prasad, Shahjahannama, Vol. I, p.66;
   Abdul Hamid Lahori, Badshahnama, Vol. I, p.409.

surrender all the jewellery and wealth of the murdered ruler to the imperial treasury, but Fateh Khan evaded the order. On February 5, 1632, the emperor sent an army under Wazir Khan, a Panjhazari mansabdar, to conquer Daultabad, and it was then that Karan Singh and other prominent Rajput sardars accompanied Wazir Khan. Karan Singh was granted Khilat and horse on this occasion.[1] Frightened by the appearance of such a mighty force Fateh Khan immediately came to terms and surrendered jewellery worth about eight lakhs of rupees and thirty elephants and nine horses to the emperor.[2] Wazir Khan, Karan Singh and other chiefs were then called back to the court.[3] But this was not the end of the episode.

Troubles brewed in and around Ahmednagar. Shahji, father of Shivaji, hovered around Ahmednagar. The emperor at the same time did not trust Fateh Khan, and decided to send Asaf Khan to the Deccan. But on his refusal to do so, Mahabat Khan was sent instead. In 1633 when Mahabat Khan invaded Fateh Khan's territories and froced the fort of Daultabad to surrender, Karan Singh was with the imperial forces.[4]

About the same time Jujhar Singh Bundela, who had been posted to the Deccan, left his post without the emperor's permission leaving his son, Vikramajit to his post. On returning to his territories he raided Gadhe and treacherously killed its zamindar, Prem Narain. When this was brought to the notice of the emperor, he ordered Jujhar Singh to surrender and pay ten lakhs of rupees from the looted property to the imperial treasury. Jujhar Singh did not comply with the orders of the emperor but, on the contrary, sent a message to his son Vikramajit in the Deccan to come and join him. When

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1. Devi Prasad, Shahjahannama, Vol. I, p. 67
   Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi), p. 85
   Abdul Hamid Lahori, Badshahnama, Vol. I, p.410
2. Banarsi Prasad Saxena; History of Shah Jahan of Delhi, p.137
3. Devi Prasad, Shahjahannama, Vol. I, p.67
   Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi), p.85
4. Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi), p.85
   Shah Jahan's farman dated 2nd Urdi Bihisht, 6.
   Abdul Hamid Lahori, Badshahnama, Vol. I, p.510

Vikramajit was rushing back from the Deccan, Mahabat Khan, accompanied by Karan Singh, marched in pursuit of the renegade.[1]

After taking over the fort of Daultabad, Mahabat Khan planned to annex the fort of Parande and sought the permission and assistance of the emperor who immediately despatched a large force under prince Shuja. Mahabat Khan met the imperial army at Burhanpur. During the siege, Karan Singh was also present with the imperial forces,[2] and on the night of 28th January, 1634, he along with others attacked the enemy under orders of the prince. Later on, when the siege was raised and the imperial forces were attacked by the enemy while returning, Karan Singh along with others offered stiff resistance and drove the enemy back.

Again in 1636 when Khan-i-Jahan was sent by the emperor to march on Adil Shah in assistance of Khan-i-Dauran and Khan-i-Zaman, Karan Singh was with Khan-i-Jahan.[3] During this time, Karan Singh came into conflict with Jodhpur. Amar Singh, the eldest son of Gaj Singh, the ruler of Jodhpur (1619-1638), was excluded from succeeding to the gaddi and his younger brother Jaswant Singh was nominated his successor by Gaj Singh, and Amar Singh exiled. He went to Delhi to appeal to Shah Jahan who received him cordially and conferred the title of Rao on him and granted him Nagor as jagir. Since Bikaner and Nagor had a common boundary, boundary-disputes were common and Amar Singh took possession of Jakhania, a border village in the territory of Bikaner. When news reached Karan Singh at Delhi, he ordered his ministers at Bikaner to take back the village. In the encounter that followed (in 1644), Amar Singh's forces were defeated and the village taken back. When Amar Singh learnt of this in Delhi, he tried to come to Nagor and lead

1. Devi Prasad, Shahjahannama, Vol. I, pp. 142-43
2. Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi), p.85
3. Elliot, Op.cit. Vol. VII, pp.51-60

a counter-attack, but Karan Singh came to learn of his intentions and apprised the emperor of the facts as a result of which Amar Singh was refused permission to leave Delhi. Thus by detaining both Karan Singh and Amar Singh at Delhi, Shah Jahan prevented the feud from worsening.[1]

In the year 1648, Karan Singh's mansab was raised from two thousand personal and fifteen hundred horse to two thousand personal and two thousand horse and he was appointed Kiledar of Daultabad in place of Saadat Khan. About a year later, his mansab was further raised to twenty five hundred personal and two thousand horse[2] and in 1652, it was again raised to three thousand personal and two thousand horse.[3]

On a decision having been taken to annex the province of Jawari to the imperial territories, the zamindari of Jawari was included in the mansab of Karan Singh and he was asked to dispossess the zamindar. The zamindar of Jawari being unable to offer opposition submitted on condition that he be given the right to collect the revenue of the estate. He made costly presents to Karan Singh and gave his son as hostage. Karan Singh having accomplished his mission returned to join Aurangzeb who was at the time posted in the Deccan.[4]

Karan Singh followed a neutral policy during the war of succession to the Delhi throne. In the year 1657-58, Shah Jahan fell ill and the business of the State was entrusted by the ailing monarch to his eldest son Darashukoh. Aurangzeb had since a long time been planning to succeed his father while

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.162-64
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.35
2. Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit. p.298
   Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi), p.86
3. Ibid.
4. Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi), pp. 86-87



The Emperor Aurangzeb brushing off the dust with his own handkerchief from the armour of the two redoubtable sons of Raja Karan Singhji of Bikaner, Raj Kumar Kesri Singhji and Raj Kumar Padam Singhji—" Warriors as brave as any who have sprung from the Rathore stock"—" as they stood before him hot from the battle."—Powlett.

PLATE IX

prince Shuja who was in Bengal was as desirous to succeed his father. Aurangzeb incited his brother Murad who was in Gujerat to make a bid for the throne and promised him his support. The armies of these princes moved out to converge on the capital. Prospects of the outbreak of a bloody fratricidal war set sardars, princes and military leaders to range themselves on the side of one or the other of the claimants. Only Karan Singh, in keeping with the traditional policy of Bikaner rulers tried to keep himself aloof from the war and await the issue of the struggle to tender his homage to one who finally occupied the throne. He, therefore, withdrew from the Deccan and returned to Bikaner to watch the turn of events.[1] He came away without seeking Aurangzeb's permission, but Aurangzeb was not the man to forget this affront.

Kesri Singh and Padam Singh, two of Karan Singh's four sons, however, took a gallant part in the wars of succession on the side of Aurangzeb. In the final fight against Dara they particularly distinguished themselves and Aurangzeb presented Kesri Singh a sword with a hilt encased in gold.[2] Aurangzeb is also reported to have flicked with his own handkerchief the dust of battle from the coat of both the brothers when they returned from a hard fought battle to report their success.[3] This was considered a unique honour which an emperor ever bestowed.[4] But Aurangzeb felt that their father, Karan Singh, should be brought to book. But as soon as the

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1. Powlett, in his Gazetteer of the Bikaner State (p.35), however, says that "in the struggle between the sons of Shah Jahan for the imperial throne, the Bikaner chief threw in his lot with the fortunate Aurangzeb."
2. This sword is preserved in Bikaner.
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.176
4. Powlett, Op.cit. p.35. This incident is represented in a painting which is now in the Rajasthan Government Museum at Bikaner.

Mughal officer reached the Bikaner boundary, Karan Singh, taking two of his sons, Anup Singh and Padam Singh, met Amir Khan and went with him to the emperor's Darbar in 1660. The emperor then received him back in his favour, confirmed his mansab and sent him to take charge of the Deccan.[1]

In 1666 Aurangzeb deputed Karan Singh to accompany Diler Khan Daudzai in the expedition sent to reduce Jalal Khan, the zamindar of Chanda to submission. But, while on this mission the emperor deprived the Maharaja of his mansab, nominating his eldest son, Anup Singh, to the rulership of Bikaner and conferring on him the mansab of twenty-five hundred personal and two thousand horse.[2] What lapse on the part of Karan Singh led the emperor to take this drastic step is not mentioned in any contemporary record. That such an order was issued is borne out by a farman[3] to that effect issued by the emperor in 1667 (16th Rabi-ul-Aval, the 10th year of Aurangzeb's reign). It is probable that the emperor, having established himself securely on the Mughal throne wished to punish Karan Singh for his having avoided to fight on his side in his contest for the throne of Delhi. However, both in the Bikaner as well as the Jaipur Khyats certain facts are mentioned which provide a clue to the chief reason which inflamed the emperor against Karan Singh.

According to Dayal Das, when Aurangzeb sent his forces against Iran,[4] he sent for many of the Hindu princes to accompany the imperial army. While the forces were encamping at Attock the princes in their curiosity to find out the reason why so many of them were summoned on this occasion, deputed a Sayed

1. Devi Prasad, Aurangzebnama, pt. I, p.50
   Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi), p.88
   Sarcar; History of Aurangzeb, Vol. III, p.26
2. Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit. p.299
   Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi), p.88
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.498
   Aurangzeb's farman dated 11th January, 1667
3. ~~He puts the date of this campaign as 4th September, 1666.~~
   Appendix VIII
4. Devi Prasad, Aurangzebnama, pt. I, pp.67-68. He puts the date of this campaign as 4th September, 1666.



The Emperor Aurangzeb's Treachery to convert the Hindu Princes to Islam frustrated at Attock by Raja Karan Singhji of Bikaner, who took the lead at the head of the other Rajput Rulers.

"Jai Jangal Dhar Badshah" (Victory to the King of the Jangal)—Motto of the Rulers of Bikaner.

PLATE X

Faqir of Sahwa, who was in the party of Maharaja Karan Singh, to make enquiries. The faqir learnt from one Astkhan that the intention of the emperor was to have the Hindu princes converted to Islam and conveyed the information to Maharaja Karan Singh. The Hindu princes, therefore, decided to manipulate not to cross the Attock in advance of the Mughal forces. The next morning they demanded being allowed to cross the river first knowing full well that the Mughals would take this as a slight to them and would not agree to the demand and thus they would be left behind. The Mughals easily fell a prey to their ruse. They insisted upon crossing the river first and the Princes' object was achieved. Meanwhile news of the death of the mother of the ruler of Jaipur was also received and after making a submission to the emperor, the princes remained behind for mourning. The problem, however, was only deferred and not solved. When the mourning period was over, the princes thought of returning to their respective places but none was prepared to take the lead. Thereupon all the princes approached Maharaja Karan Singh to take the lead in destroying the boats which were awaiting to take them across. On Maharaja Karan Singh's accomplishing the task, the princes present one and all acclaimed him as the emperor of India and granted the Sayed faqir the right to collect one paisa per house in their territories and returned to their territories.[1]

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.193-95
   A copy of the Sanad making the grant is available in the former Bikaner State Bahi for the Samvat 1866 preserved in the Rajasthan State Archives at Bikaner. This copy was made from the original, as noted therein, at the time of renewing the same as the old one had been torn.

   Such grants were not uncommon in the Rajputana States at the time. We have the instance of Chand Shah faqir of Jodhpur who was not only granted similar privilege in the Jodhpur State for services rendered to the throne and house of Jodhpur, but who also held the high Tazim of wearing a gold anklet.

PLATE XI



Maharaj Kesri Singh, brother of Maharaja Anup Singh, fighting with a lioness (Miniature 1715-20)

According to a Jaipur Khuat, the princes remained behind on the plea of celebrating the birth of a son to Maharaja Karan Singh and when the Mughal forces had crossed over, Maharaja Karan Singh took the lead in destroying the boats. On hearing the news, Aurangzeb went to the camp of Maharaja Karan Singh and came to know of the truth. Thereupon he remarked that since you all (the princes) have recognized the ruler of Bikaner as the emperor, he shall henceforth be "Jangalpat Badshah."[1]

Aurangzeb returned to Delhi greatly angered and immediately ordered an army against Karan Singh. Karan Singh at once repaired to Deshnoke to seek the blessings of Karniji, the guardian devi of the House of Bikaner, and, it is believed his prayers were heard, for the army which had advanced to the borders of Bikaner, was suddenly recalled by the emperor, and the Maharaja summoned to Delhi.[2] After considerable deliberations it was decided that Anup Singh should go to Delhi and that his two sons, Kesri Singh and Padam Singh should go in advance. If any treachery was intended the Maharaja was resolved to show how a Rathore dies.

A new development had now taken place. Banmali Das, a natural son of Karan Singh, offered to become Musalman if he was granted by the emperor the mansab of Bikaner. The emperor, it is said, consented and arranged that the Raja should be murdered in Darbar after his arrival in Delhi.[3] But this plot was frustrated when Karan Singh appeared in the Darbar accompanied by his two formidable sons, Kesri Singh and Padam Singh, who took their seats on either side of their father. Aurangzeb made a sign to the assassin to withdraw. When Karan Singh and

1. A handwritten Khyat in the collection of Purohit Hari Narain, B.A. of Jaipur (as quoted by Ojha, Vol. I, p.246)
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.197
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.198
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.pp. 35-36

his sons stood up to take their leave the emperor complimented the Raja on the gallantry displayed by his sons during all his wars and gave special praise to Kesri Singh for having saved his life in the final battle he fought against Dara. Karan Singh cunningly commented that it was due to his assiduous reading of the Quran even during the heat of battle.

Karan Singh was spared his life but the earlier order of the emperor depriving him of his mansab and rulership of Bikaner was not rescinded. Instead, he was sent to Aurangabad (Deccan) where he held a grant of the betel garden in which the Raja made his abode and gave it the name 'Karanpura'.[1] Here he built a temple which he dedicated to Karniji and till the end of the nineteenth century, it was maintained by the Bikaner State treasury.[2] A year before his death, Karan Singh sent a message to his son Anup Singh to be on guard against the traitor Banmalidas.[3] Karan Singh died in Aurangabad in 1669.[4]

Karan Singh deserves to be ranked amongst the best rulers of Bikaner. He was the first Bikaner ruler who presented a bold front against Aurangzeb's religious fanaticism. He served the Central Mughal Power loyally and gallantly against its enemies. He had rendered invaluable aid as a valiant soldier in Shah Jahan's wars against Fateh Khan, Shahji and in the siege of Parande. In recognition of it the emperor conferred on him high honours. He was considered so loyal and trustworthy that Shah Jahan deputed him to wrest the pargana

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.199
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 38
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.201
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.38
3. Powlett, Op.cit. p.38
4. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.201.
   An inscription on Maharaja Karan Singh's Chhatri also bears this date. It may be pointed out that Tod has wrongly stated that Karan Singh died in Bikaner. All other chronicles mention Karanpura as being the place where he died.



Maharaja Anup Singh on horse-back (Miniature 1690-95)

of Jawari and later appointed him to administer it. He gave ample proof of his statesmanship by keeping aloof from the war of succession. He knew that he would have to suffer grave consequences if the party he supported were to lose in the contest. But when he realised that Aurangzeb by his unscrupulous methods and doggedness of purpose, would win ultimate success, he allowed his two sons, Padam Singh and Kesri Singh to join Aurangzeb's side. Both these young princes fought most gallantly to the admiration of Aurangzeb. Karan Singh, however, had thoroughly gauged Aurangzeb's cunning and unscrupulous character and always remained on guard against being tricked by him into dangerous position. When he found Aurangzeb becoming intolerably bigoted against the Hindus, Karan Singh did not hesitate to oppose him boldly as the leader of the dissatisfied Hindu princes. The latter, in recognition of this, unanimously gave him the title of 'Jangaldhar Badshah'- a title which is proudly borne by his descendants down to this day. He suffered for his espousal of the cause of Hindu religion and culture, yet no amount of emperor's displeasure could cow him down.

Anup Singh had become the administrator of Bikaner in the lifetime[1] of his father who had incurred the displeasure of the emperor and was divested of his ruling powers as described before. Born in 1638[2], Anup Singh was thirty-one years old at the time of his father's death.

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1. Aurangzeb's farman dated 16th Rabi-ul-Awwal, 10.
   A stone inscription found on the cenatoph of a Sati of Pasdutt son of Shah Dev Karan dating to the year A.D.1667 (V.S. 1724) mentions the name of both Maharajas, Karan Singh and Anup Singh together and corroborates this fact. The inscription reads:-

   "श्री गणेशायनमः स्वस्ति श्री नृपते वि[illegible] राज्यात् संवत् १७२४ वर्षे शके १५८० [illegible] स्तिथौ सोमवासरे ॥ महाराजाधिराज [illegible] अनूपसिंह विजय राज्ये ॥ ...."

   [illegible] Bikaner Jain Lekh

Although Anup Singh was already the de facto ruler of Bikaner at the time of his father's death away from home, some time elapsed before it could be rendered de jure by a confirmatory farman from Aurangzeb. This delay was caused by the machination at the imperial court of Banmali Das who sought the rulership of Bikaner as a reward for his apostacy. It took some negotiations at the Mughal court before the succession of Anup Singh could be confirmed, and was done by the emperor's farman dated 22nd Safar, 2, corresponding to 22nd July 1669.[1] As the ruler of Bikaner, Anup Singh held the parganas of Sujawalpur, Nasro and Rakhawat in the Deccan.[2] He was associated with Aurangzeb's Deccan expeditions throughout his reign.

Anup Singh who had been counted by Aurangzeb amongst his most dependable adherents, was associated with almost every important battle in Aurangzeb's long Deccan campaign. In 1670 Anup Singh and several other Rajput mansabdars were awarded robes of honour and sent to the Deccan with Mahabat Khan against Shivaji.[3] Though the Mughal commander could not gain any success, Anup Singh displayed a commendable gallantry in all the engagements with the result that while changes took place in the high command, Anup Singh continued to be present in the Deccan.[4] He was present at the battle of Salher which was fought in 1672. But the Mughals after small initial gains

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1. Aurangzeb's farman dated 22nd Safar, 2.
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.204. He mentions the following parganas being included in Anup Singh's territories at the time of his accession in addition to the territories of the Bikaner State:-
   Sirsa, Sivran, Tisam, Maim, Fatehabad, Ahravo, Ratio, Malot, Bharathner, Phalodi, Siwani, Agarvo, Athkhera, Bhatwan as also the three parganas in the south, namely, Sujawalpur, Nasro, Rakhaot.
3. Mohammad Saki, Masir-i-Alamgiri, p.107
   Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit., p.63
   Devi Prasad, Aurangzebnama, vol. II, p.30
4. Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit. p. 63
   Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi), p. 90

suffered serious reverses. Aurangzeb recalled Mahabat Khan and sent Bahadur Khan to relieve him.

The tempo of the campaign increased and a battle was fought at Bijapur in 1673. This triangular battle between the Marathas, the Bijapur ruler and the Mughals ultimately resulted in the Mughal supreme commander Bahadur Khan being able to exact Peshkash (present) both from the ruler of Bijapur as well as the ruler of Hyderabad which was duly remitted to the emperor's treasury.[1] Aurangzeb, in appreciation of their services, awarded in 1675, titles and robes of honour to his officers who had fought in this campaign; and Anup Singh was given the title of Maharaja.[2]

Later, on receiving a complaint against Bahadur Khan who was alleged to have been bribed by the enemy, Aurangzeb recalled him and entrusted Diler Khan with the conduct of the Deccan war. Anup Singh continued and acquitted himself valiantly under the new command,[3] and fought in the battle against Golcunda. Diler Khan attacked Bijapur, took possession of it and laid the surrounding country waste. In 1677-78, Anup Singh was appointed as administrator of Aurangabad. But in the same year Shivaji extended his raids in that direction. Anup Singh called all his forces to arms and prepared to give the Maratha chief battle. Both the sides were well balanced but there came a moment when it appeared that the Marathas would carry the day. Just at that time Bahadur Khan appeared with fresh troops and this changed the fortune of the battle. Shivaji retreated from the field.[4]

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1. Devi Prasad, Aurangzebnama, Vol. II, p.55
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.205
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.39
   Erskine, Op.cit., p.322.
3. Brajratan Das, Op.cit.(Hindi), p.90
4. Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi), p.90
   Mohammad Said Ahmad, Op.cit. p.63

In 1678 Anup Singh was appointed Hakim of Aduni and deputed to suppress the revolt which had broken out there. Anup Singh rushed there in all haste, but in the fight which ensured he was about to suffer a reverse when the timely arrival of his gallant brother Padam Singh changed into victory what had threatened to have become a disastrous defeat for the Maharaja.[1]

When in 1678 he was in the Deccan at Aduni, information was brought to him that the Bhati Thakurs of Kharbara and Raimalwali had rebelled. A Bania official Mukand Rai who was with the Maharaja volunteered to go to suppress them. He came to Bikaner, raised a force of nearly four thousand men and marched against the rebels. He was assisted by Bhag Chand who, though a Bhati, remained loyal to the Maharaja. Nearly two thousand rebellious Bhatis who had assembled in the fort of Churia, about a hundred miles to the north of Bikaner, were besieged by Mukand Rai's forces. The Bhatis sought the help of the Johiyas, but they could be of no more help than to taunt Mukand Rai's Rathores that they had never on previous occasions been able to take the fort and had therefore no reason to claim it now. But this being of no material relief to the starving Bhatis besieged in the fort, they sent two of their leaders, Jagrup Singh and Bihari Das on being assured of their safety by the Rathore leaders, to discuss terms with Mukand Rai and his lieutenant Amar Singh Sringot. After a long discussion, it was agreed that the Bhatis should pay one lakh of rupees after which the Rathores would raise the siege and depart.

The Bhati sardars came to negotiate peace inspite of the written warning someone had sent them against treachery. In five days' time the Bhatis produced Rs.50,000/- and promised to pay the balance soon. They also showed the letter of warning

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.209-10.

which was laughed at by the Rathore leaders. To establish their bona fides they told the Bhatis not to be anxious about the payment of the balance for they were confident of getting it remitted by the Maharaja. This helped to restore their confidence and they sent away the Johiyas. Now when the fort was left with only a garrison of five hundred men, Mukand Rai and Amar Singh, acting on the principle that all is fair in love and war, attacked the fort at night breaking their promise. Jagrup Singh and Behari Das were killed in the fight and the fort was taken by the Rathores. Pleased with this success Anup Singh who was still at Aduni, rewarded Mukand Rai and Amar Singh handsomely and made the grant of Kharbara to Bhag Chand Bhati who had remained true to him.[1] On the site of this fort, a larger fort named 'Anupgarh' was built in 1678.

On the death of Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur in 1679 Aurangzeb annexed his territories. Maharaja Anup Singh and Maharaja Ram Singh of Ratlan both tried through their Vakils at the imperial court for the restoration of the territories to Maharaja Ajit Singh, the eldest son of Maharaja Jaswant Singh but failed as Maharaja Jaswant Singh had incurred the emperor's displeasure.[2]

In 1679 Saiyad Najabat, Kiledar of Ahont, sent an express message to the emperor informing him that Shivaji's lieutenant Moropanth had transgressed into the Mughal possessions in the Deccan and that unless immediate aid was sent to check his advance the Marathas would over-run the entire Mughal territory in the south. Aurangzeb thereupon sent urgent orders[3] to Anup Singh to proceed at once to the spot and get the aggression of the Marathas vacated.

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.210-13
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp. 39-40
2. Jodhpur Rajya ki Khyat Vol. II, p.16 as quoted by Ojha.
3. Aurangzeb's Nishan dated 14th Ramzan, 23, under the seal of Shah Alam.

During this time (1682) Anup Singh had to get rid of his half-brother Banmali Das. It has already been narrated that Banmali Das had become a convert to Islam and was Anup Singh's rival for the gaddi of Bikaner. Banmali Das had succeeded in obtaining the support of Saiyad Hasan Ali who had great influence with the emperor. Hasan Ali succeeded in obtaining the emperor's order for the grant of half the Bikaner mansab to Banmali Das, and equipped with this order Banmali came to Bikaner at the head of three thousand men and encamped near the old fort of Bika. The Maharaja who was present in Bikaner entertained him lavishly, but Banmali, a convert to Islam went out of his way to exhibit his disregard for Hindu sentiments by getting goats and sheep slaughtered near the temple of Lakshminath. On being remonstrated against this, he threatened to have cows slaughtered there. He then sent for the accountants and asked them to produce their ledgers so that he could find out what villages he should take for his share; but the accountants refused to hand over their books and were, therefore, held prisoners. The Maharaja who was upset by his ~~half~~ natural-brother's behaviour, was at a loss to find a solution. But one Ude Ram, a clever Ahir, offered to help him and went to Banmali to assure him that he could give him all the requisite information and that keeping the accountants imprisoned would serve no good purpose. The clerks of the Maharaja were set free, and Banmali decided to have his fort built at Chingoi. He also decided upon the villages he would like to have for his share. Ude Ram came to the Maharaja and got him to issue a Ruka (authority) for the transferance of these places to Banmali.

But this was only meant to deceive Banmali and to make him believe that he had realised his ambition. Now the Maharaja planned to murder Banmali Das with the assistance of Lakshmi Das Sonagra, a poor Thakur whose daughter Anup Singh had married. At the time of giving away his daughter the poor

Thakur had said that as he was unable to give adequate dowry, he would undertake to carry out the most difficult commission of the Maharaja even at the cost of his life. This was the chance for the Maharaja to send his father-in-law on a mission to kill Banmali. But as the Thakur was hesitating to shed the blood of one of Karan Singh's sons, Anup Singh arranged to send one Bika as a companion to share the sin, if any, involved in the act. The two started in disguise for the camp of Banmali where they sought refuge as exiles from Bikaner. To give credence to their plea, it was planned that the Maharaja should send a messenger to Banmali asking him not to give refuge to those outlaws of Bikaner. This letter had the desired effect for Banmali took these so-called refugees in his special favour. The Thakur who had taken a slave girl with him as if she were his daughter, offered to give her in marriage to Banmali. The girl, now Banmali's bride, entered the Harem and administered poison to Banmali in his drink as directed by the Thakur and thus the Thakur rid his son-in-law of his rival. A Nawab from Delhi who had accompanied Banmali as commander of the troops had now to be won over and his silence was secured by presenting him one lakh of rupees. The Nawab returned to Delhi to announce that Banmali had died a natural death. Thus Maharaja Anup Singh consolidated his position within his own State of Bikaner and his father-in-law as well as Ude Ram Ahir were amply rewarded.[1]

Aurangzeb's success in his wars with Shivaji was largely due to the gallantry of Anup Singh specially in Bijapur and Golcunda. Sikander, the ruler of Bijapur was a weak man and [illegible]ersons like Abdul Rauf and Sharza Khan had begun [illegible]advantage of his weakness. Aurangzeb, at this [illegible]tention of annexing Bijapur. But when Sambhaji, [illegible], rose from strength to strength and it became

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[illegible] Vol. II, pp.217-19



Raja Anup Singhji, 10th Ruler of Bikaner, was created "Maharajah" by the Emperor Aurangzeb for his very prominent and heroic part in command of the Moghul Imperial Armies, and particularly in the capture of the Golconda Fort near the Capital of Hyderabad (Deccan). The present Ruler is the 12th Maharajah, and the 21st Ruler of Bikaner in succession.

PLATE XIII

likely that he would soon lay his hands on Bijapur, if not checked early enough, the emperor set an army in motion for the defence of Bijapur and wrote to Sikander to give all necessary aid to this army. But Sikander ignored the behest; as well as other communications which were sent to him in this behalf. Aurangzeb grew apprehensive of the bona fides of Sikander and therefore found it necessary to come personally in the wake of this army. During this advance against Bijapur in 1686 Aurangzeb discovered to his great disappointment that his son Shah Alam was in secret correspondence with the enemy. Anup Singh who was present during the entire period of operations against Bijapur[1], very greatly contributed in the reduction of Sikander to submission.[2] In the same year, Anup Singh was appointed Kiledar and faujdar of Sagar in the district of Bijapur.[3]

In 1687, Aurangzeb advanced against Golcunda to reduce its recalcitrant ruler Abdul Hussan to subjection. The emperor's officers were divided in their opinion about the emperor's policy regarding Golcunda. The ruler of this State was a Shia Musalman, and the Shia element in the emperor's army resented the imperial orders to fight against Golcunda. They had several sympathisers amongst Sunnis as well. Prince Shah Alam also did not approve of the invasion. The emperor's forces fought only half-heartedly and the siege of Golcunda prolonged.

We have it on the authority of 'Dayal Das ri Khyat' that Anup Singh was present at the siege of Golcunda and that in recognition of his services his mansab was raised.[4] He had been

1. Mohamad Saqi Mustaidkhan; Masir-i-Alamgiri, p.277. Maharaja Anup Singh is stated to have had an audience with the emperor at Bijapur and have been awarded Khilat.
2. Devi Prasad, Aurangzebnama, Vol. III, p.33
3. Mohamad Saqi Mustaid Khan, Op.cit. p.283
4. Dayal Das; Op.cit. Vol. II, p.206

brought from Sakkhar by Zulfikar Khan who was summoned by the emperor from Peshawar where he was conducting operations against rebellious tribesmen. Dayal Das in his Khyat says that the war was being fought against Tana Shah. Probably Dayal Das means Abul Hussan who was actually the ruler of Golcunda at that time as stated by contemporary persian historians. With the arrival of fresh troops Aurangzeb increased the speed of the operation and finally succeeded in obtaining the surrender of Abul Hussan. The emperor further raised the mansab of Maharaja Anup Singh to three thousand five hundred in recognition of his gallantry during the battle.[1] In 1689 Anup Singh was appointed governor of Amtiazgarh Aduni[2] and in 1693 he was appointed governor of Nasrqtabad Sukkar.[3]

From the above brief account it is amply borne out that the House of Bikaner acted as one of the main supports of the Mughal kingdom and even though actively resentful of religious fanaticism of Aurangzeb, the Bikaner rulers did their best to maintain the solidarity of the Mughal rule. In the larger interest of the Indian political organisation the conduct of the Bikaner rulers was perhaps conducive to the preservation of the central authority at a time when there was no other power to fill the vacuum which the breakdown of the Mughal power would have created. Later when the disintegration of the Central Power could no longer be stemmed, we know how the country was torn by factional fights carried on by ambitious persons, each of whom aimed at taking a slice out of the grand Mughal empire to create independent principalities. It must be said to the credit of the House of Bikaner that they recognized even in those days that the Muslims in India both

1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.206
2. Devi Prasad, Aurangzebnama, pt. III, p.94
3. Mohammad Said Ahmad, Umrai Hanud, p.63
   Brajratan Das, Op.cit. (Hindi) p.90

as rulers as well as citizens were not aliens and any attempt at expelling them from the country would be impossible and harmful.

In recognition of the impressive services rendered by Anup Singh and his brothers, Aurangzeb conferred on him the insignia of Mahi-e-Maratib, the highest honour of the Mughal court.[1]

Anup Singh died at Aduni in 1698 (Sunday the 9th Jeyshth of the V.S. 1755). He was a brave soldier as one could expect a Rathore Rajput to be. But as a scholar and patron of learning he excelled all his predecessors. Anup Singh was recognized for his scholarship in Sanskrit and mastery over the spoken language. To him goes the credit of having retrieved from concealment or from destruction many valuable Sanskrit treatises when Aurangzeb had launched his anti-Hundu crusade. Many works on a variety of subjects were produced by a number of scholars who were attracted to Bikaner by Anup Singh's patronage of learning. Many a Musician found refuge under Anup Singh, for Aurangzeb had prohibited this fine art in his realm. But for this music loving prince many a treatise on classical Hindu music would have been lost or would not have been produced. A catalogue of all the literary books collected by or produced under Anup Singh's inspiration is to be found in the Anup Sanskrit Library, Bikaner.

Some members of the House of Bikaner who performed meritorious services during the period, also deserve mention. They were Kesri Singh, Padam Singh and Mohan Singh. Kesri Singh the second son of Maharaja Karan Singh, who was born in 1641, had fought, as mentioned before, in the war of Mughal succession on the side of Aurangzeb and won the emperor's high appreciation of the gallantry he displayed fighting for his cause. The

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1. Maj. General Sir William Sleeman in his "Rambles and Recollections of an Indian official" says that this rare distinction was awarded only to a limited number of "Great Territorial Sovereigns of the country" and "upon independent princes of the first class".

   - Quoted from the House of Bikaner, p.21

   The insignia of Mahi-e-Maratib is still in the possession of the author and is kept in the Bikaner fort Museum along with other personal collections of the rulers of Bikaner.



beautiful sword which Aurangzeb presented him is still preserved as a family heirloom. There are many stories current about the daring and prowess of this prince. Col. Tod in his history of Rajasthan narrates that this young prince once fought and killed a tiger with his bare hands. For this the king rewarded him with the grant of a jagir of twenty-five villages. While fighting an engagement during the Deccan wars he is reported to have struck off with one blow the head of a Negro officer who was commanding the army of the Bahmani king. During the Bengal disturbances of 1667, he was sent with Raja Ram Singh of Amer and others to suppress the rebellion. Kesri Singh died in 1685.

Padam Singh, the third son of Maharaja Karan Singh, four years younger than Kesri Singh, is regarded as the bravest man of his time and has become almost a legendary hero of Bikaner. Reckless courage and great personal strength were the characteristics which distinguished this young prince. Few could survive the terrific blow of his sword and everyone treated him with due deference for fear of provoking his anger. It is said that once while his younger brother, Mohan Singh, and he were with the emperor at Aurangabad, a pet deer of Mohan Singh strayed out of his camp and was taken possession of by the servant of the Kotwal Mohammad Shah Mir, the brother-in-law of prince Muazzam. When Mohan Singh sent his servant to get the deer back, he was threatened and sent back. Next day when Mohan Singh went to pay his respects to the emperor he accosted the Kotwal and asked him for the return of the pet, but the Kotwal refused and called him a liar. This provoked Mohan Singh to fight but before he could draw his sword the Kotwal and his brother-in-law fell upon him and wounded him mortally. Padam Singh who was smoking his hukka not far from the ante-room (Deori) where this tragedy took place heard the noise of the affray, and rushed to the spot. Finding his brother lying in a pool of blood, he took up his shield and drew his huge sword and rushed at the Kotwal while the latter ran into

the Darbar chamber, followed by Padam Singh. Seeing the leonine anger of the Rajput prince, the emperor and all his courtiers hurried out of the room and Padam Singh with roar struck such a mighty blow at the Kotwal who was hiding behind a pillar that he was cut into two and a big chip was also splintered off the stone pillar and the sword.[1]

There are many other anecdotes pertaining to the extra-ordinary strength of this prince. He is said to have dragged an elephant of a Nawab by pulling at the howda in which the Nawab was riding with the Raja of Jodhpur. Both the Nawab and the Raja were plotting to murder Maharaja Karan Singh but this exhibition of Padam Singh's strength frightened them. His famous sword measuring 3 ft. 11 inches and 2½ inches broad and his exercising sword weighing 25 lbs. and 4 ft. 6 inches long and 2½ inches broad, are preserved in the Bikaner Armoury and his sword is worshipped on a special day every year.

Padam Singh died fighting against the Marathas on the bank of the river Tapti on 24th March, 1683[2] but not before he had killed the enemy commanders Sawant Rai and Jyodo Rai along ~~and~~ with a number of their other ranks. The emperor mourned the loss of this valiant soldier of his empire and sent a letter of condolence to Anup Singh.

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1. The sword and the chip are kept at the fort Museum in Bikaner.

2. Bhim Sen Burhanpuri; Nuskha-i-Dilkhusha, p.173. Also "जेथे यांची शकावली" - शके १६०५ क्रोधिरोद्गारी संवत्सरे चैत्र मासी रोहिला खान कोल वणातून उतरोन रणमस्त खान धाडावरी घेऊन गेला। येते वेलेस रुपा जी जेसले याणी तिटोली याजवल लढाई केली। परमसिंग रजपूत घेतला। युध्य प्रसंग होऊन परमसिंग व कितेक घोर घोर लोक मारिले।"

Mohan Singh, the fourth and youngest son of Karan Singh, who was killed by the Kotwal of Aurangzeb, as described above, was a favourite and friend of prince Muazzam. Many officers grew jealous of him and were on the look out to liquidate him and it is suspected that the prince's brother-in-law Mohammad Shah Mir, picked up a quarrel with him on the petty affair of a stolen deer only to get rid of him.

Sarup Singh, the eldest son of Maharaja Anup Singh, born in 1689,[1] was only nine years of age when he succeeded his father to the gaddi of Bikaner in 1698. He was with his father at Aduni, and even after his succession, continued to stay there while the government of the State was conducted by his mother, a Sisodia princess. When in 1699, he went to the imperial court with Ram Raja and his children, who were in the custody of Zulfikar Khan,[2] he was granted a mansab of one thousand personal and five hundred horse.[3] He continued to stay at the court with Zulfikar Khan.

The officials of the Bikaner State were split up into two opposing groups. One group consisted of Kanwar Bhim Singh of Mahajan, Thakur Prithvi Singh of Bhukarka, Amar Singh of Jassana, Lalit Nazir and others. The other group consisted of Mundhra Jasrup, Chaturbhuj, Man Rampuria, Kothari Nainsi, Karam Chand and others. Of the second group, Mundhra Jasrup and Chaturbhuj were with Sarup Singh but Man Rampuria, Kothari Nainsi and others assisted the Rajmata in the administration of the State.

Once when the Rajmata fell ill, Lalit who was her trusted hand, made her believe that Man Rampuria etc. are intent upon killing her by poisoning. The Rajmata apprised of this to Sarup Singh through a special emissary, Mukand Rai who was

1. Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.500
2. Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. III, p.717
3. Mohammad Said Ahmad, op.cit. p.63
   Brajratan Das; Op.cit. (Hindi), p.90

sent back by the Maharaja with instructions. Mukand Rai, on his return, however, sent for Man Rampuria and others on the pretext of showing them the letter he had brought for them from the Maharaja, imprisoned them and later got them murdered at the instance of the Rajmata. When the news reached Sarup Singh in the Deccan, the sardars in his attendance impressed upon him that a wrong had been done and the Maharaja began to harbour ill will towards Lalit.[1] When Lalit came to know of this, he conspired with Sujan Singh and Anand Singh (the half-brothers of Sarup Singh) and convinced their mother, the Rajawat Rani, that the Rajmata was plotting to have her two sons murdered.

Rajawat Rani, on the advice of Lalit, arranged to send her sons to wait upon the emperor at Delhi under charge of Lalit. The party had hardly gone three marches towards Delhi when a Jaisalmer/ Bhati, who was also in this party and was reported to be a seer, announced that they had better stop where they were for sixteen watches, for the omens for the journey were not favourable just at that time. The party stayed on for that period and when they resumed the journey a despatch rider came from the opposite direction with the news that Maharaja Sarup Singh had died of small-pox in the Deccan. This meant that Sujan Singh, the elder of the two surviving Rathores was the next ruler of Bikaner as Sarup Singh had died without issue. The party therefore returned to Bikaner.[2] Rajawat Rani was now the rightful chief of the State as the Dowager. She assembled all the officials of the State in the palace and formally announced the accession of her son to the gaddi of Bikaner.

Sarup Singh died in 1700 while at Aduni.[3] Sujan Singh, who was born in 1690 succeeded to the gaddi of Bikaner. At the

1. Powlett, Op.cit. pp.45-46
2. Ibid, p. 46
3. Memorial inscription on Sarup Singh's cenatoph.

time Aurangzeb was in the Deccan where he summoned the young Maharaja. Sujan Singh accompanied by a number of his sardars, proceeded to the Deccan and presented himself at the emperor's court where he remained for the next ten years.[1]

When Aurangzeb died in 1707 at Ahmednagar, Ajit Singh who had been deprived of his father's (Jaswant Singh ~~'s~~ of Jodhpur) gaddi in 1679, took advantage of the waning power of the Mughal empire. He led an invasion on Jodhpur, expelled Zafar Quli Khan, the Mughal governor and ascended the ancestral gaddi.[2] Soon after, he invaded Bikaner which owing to the absence of Sujan Singh in the Deccan was being administered by his ministers and sardars. Some of these joined in intrigue with Ajit Singh who was temporarily able to capture Bikaner but had ultimately to withdraw owing to the onslaught of the Bikaner forces led by the Thakurs of Bhukarka and Malsisar.[3] The Jodhpur troops also suffered much on account of excessive heat and scarcity of water.[4]

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1. Powlett, Op.cit. pp.46-47
2. Sarcar; Short History of Aurangzeb, p.397
3. Powlett, Op.cit. p.46
4. Jodhpur, approximately 130 air-miles from Bikaner, climatically is similar to Bikaner; although the average rainfall is slightly higher.

CHAPTER V

Bikaner during the fall of the Mughal Empire.

In retrospect it may be observed that with the advent of Babar was laid the foundation of a mighty political structure at the Centre after about a century and quarter of decadence that had broken up the Delhi sultanate into fragments. By 1560 the Mughal empire had become firmly established and in the next 125 years it had grown in territory, power and wealth. The prosperity brought in its wake saw the development of art and literature and a civilisation grew up which could boast of being as high, if not higher, as any other contemporary civilisation and placed India in the fore-front of the civilised nations of the world. But the policy of Aurangzeb not only arrested this growth but led ultimately to dissolution and disintegration. His jealousy and his suspicious nature made his method of government exceed all the casuistry propounded by Machiavelli. He had deliberately set himself against that secular outlook on life which had made the rule of the three preceding generations of Mughals so successful. It was only the sanctity of the oath of fidelity given to his fore-fathers and the fear of vengeance that secured to him the obedience of the Rajput princes. By his predominantly narrow outlook and suspicious nature, he destroyed the confidence of the Rajputs. His devious methods of government and his wasteful wars had hollowed out the foundations of the Mughal empire. But the dissolution was not immediate and was only hastened by weaklings and imbeciles succeeding to the throne and became clearly manifest by 1737.

In Rajputana, the Ranas of Mewar lost their political significance after the death of Raj Singh in 1680. The Kachhawas had become influential. These factors only tended to aggravate the jealousies amongst them. Their rivalry for premiership and power as also the lack of control by the Central Power led to many a battles between one prince and another and even between one another in the same royal family.

Lawlessness became rampant, plundering raids became frequent and revolts and internecine wars the order of the day.

Sujan Singh who had succeeded to the gaddi of Bikaner in 1700 was in the Deccan where he had been called by the emperor. Ajit Singh, who had been deprived by Aurangzeb of the gaddi of Jodhpur after the death of his father, Jaswant Singh, in 1673, now rose in revolt, drove out Zafar Quli Khan the deputy faujdar of the city and occupied Jodhpur.[1] Taking advantage of Sujan Singh's absence in the Deccan, he also marched his forces against Bikaner. He was, however, ultimately compelled to withdraw.[2]

Sujan Singh returned to Bikaner convinced of the futility of placing any reliance on the power of the tottering Mughal kingdom. Aurangzeb was succeeded by his son Bahadur Shah who assumed the grandiose title "Shah Alam". His rule lasted for five years and he was succeeded by his son, Moiz-ud-Din under the title "Jahandar Shah". But within nine months of his accession, his nephew Farukhshair contrived to get him murdered. Farukhshair was only a puppet king. The real authority was wielded by the ambitious Saiyad brothers (Abdulla Khan and Hussain Khan). They took Ajit Singh of Jodhpur into their clique and got Farukhshair murdered through him.[3] After him two successors to the Mughal throne, Rafi-ul-Darjat and Rafi-ud-Daula died within the short period of seven months. After them Raushan Akhtar son of Jahandar Shah and grandson of Bahadur Shah ascended the throne assuming the name Mohammad Shah.

During the time these kaleidoscopic changes were taking place in Delhi Sujan Singh kept himself busy guarding his State against

1. Sarcar, Short History of Aurangzeb, p.397
2. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 46; Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol.60
3. Samal Das, Vir Vinod, Vol. III, pp.841-42.

rapacious elements let loose after the weakening of the Central Power. Mohammad Shah did not feel himself too secure on the shaky throne of Delhi but Sujan Singh's noble conduct during the previous cataclysmic years alone offered some hope of sincere friendship. He, therefore, sent him an urgent call to come to Delhi. But Sujan Singh did not consider it wise to risk being absent from his State and in order to maintain the relations with the Central Power, sent Khawas Anand Ram and Jasrup with a contingent of armed men to Delhi and deputed Mehta Prithvi Singh with a force to guard Ajmer.[1]

Zorawar Singh, Sujan Singh's eldest son, was jealous of Khawas Anand Ram who had enjoyed the confidence of the Maharaja and wanted to have him removed from office. But being unsuccessful, he went to live at Nohar away from his father and succeeded in getting Anand Ram murdered. This annoyed Sujan Singh and Zorawar Singh shifted to Udasar still farther away from his father. This rift between the father and the son created a very bad atmosphere in the State and at last Sujan Singh was prevailed upon to call Zorawar Singh back and pardon him. Finally Sujan Singh handed over the work of administering the State to Zorawar Singh.[2]

In the meantime, fresh troubles started with Jodhpur. With the connivance of the Mughal emperor Mohammad Shah, Abhe Singh succeeded in getting his father Ajit Singh murdered (23rd June 1724) and ascended[3] the gaddi of Jodhpur and resuming his father's policy against Bikaner, sent his brother Bakhat Singh with a strong army to march on Bikaner in 1733. The Jodhpur forces, however, could not break through Bikaner's resistance and suffered greatly for want of water and supplies and had eventually to withdraw on the 20th February, 1734.[4]

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1. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 47
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 60-61
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 62
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.48
3. Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp.842-44
4. Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.500-501
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp. 47
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 61

A few months later, Bakhat Singh again invaded Bikaner but had ultimately to flee back (June 1734).[1]

In addition to this external danger, Sujan Singh had to suppress internal feuds. A quarrel had occurred between Kushal Singh, Thakur of Bhukarka and Lal Singh, Thakur of Bhadra. When both the parties took to arms to settle their disputes, Sujan Singh went to restore peace among them and succeeded in his efforts. While he was still in camp at Raisinghpur, he took fatally ill and died on 16th December, 1735.[2]

Zorawar Singh ascended the gaddi of Bikaner in 1736 on the death of his father Sujan Singh at the age of thirty-three years (born on 14th January, 1713). He immediately took up the task of expelling Jodhpur troops who had occupied a number of Thanas on the Bikaner-Jodhpur border.[3] Recent wars with Jodhpur, fought during the reign of his father, had caused a weakness in the internal administration of the State, and then had arisen certain disaffected elements among the Thakurs chief of them being Sangram Singh of Churu. But before he could gather strength, the young Maharaja expelled him from the State and appointed Jujhar Singh in his place. Sangram Singh went to Jodhpur where he was given great importance. But as Zorawar Singh did not like the idea of any one of his sardars staying at Jodhpur, he pardoned him for his earlier failings and restored his jagir to him. Sangram Singh returned home but was audacious enough to evade presenting himself before the Maharaja to do him homage. This provoked the Maharaja's anger and Sangram Singh was deprived of his jagir again and he once again went to Jodhpur. This time he took Lal Singh of Bhadra with him and was received well by the ruler of Jodhpur.[4]

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 62-63.
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp. 48-49
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.501
2. Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.501
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.49
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 63
3. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 49
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 63
4. Ibid.
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.502

The failure of Abhe Singh, the ruler of Jodhpur, in his previous attempts against Bikaner had not lessened his ambition to capture it. The arrival of the Thakur of Churu at his court led him to hope that the influence of this sardar in his home-land might stand him in good stead if he made a fresh attempt to invade Bikaner. He, therefore, placed a force of ten thousand men under Thakur Sangram Singh and asked him to advance against Bikaner. Sangram Singh entered the territory of Bikaner without encountering any opposition. Abhe Singh, the ruler of Jodhpur, also advanced upon Bikaner with another force of fifteen thousand strong. But luckily for Zorawar Singh, Bakhat Singh, the younger brother of Abhe Singh, had quarrelled with his brother and offered to help Zorawar Singh. Zorawar Singh deppatched a contingent of eight thousand strong under the command of Mehta Bakhtawar Singh to the assistance of Bakhat Singh in the attack on Jodhpur. Abhe Singh was surprised by this development against himself and came to terms with his brother by paying a sum of two lakh rupees and abandoning his invasion of Bikaner. Bakhat Singh sent back the Bikaner contingent with gifts.[1]

This was, however, only a truce between Bikaner and Jodhpur for in 1740, with the help of some influential persons of Bikaner, such as Sangram Singh of Churu, Lal Singh of Bhadra (who had accompanied Sangram Singh) and the Thakur of Mahajan who had joined hands with Abhe Singh, the ruler of Jodhpur, the latter again marched against Bikaner and reached Deshnoke. Here he visited the temple of Karniji and asked the Charans of the temple to offer prayers and invoke the blessings of Karniji in the same style as they did for the rulers of Bikaner. The Charans refused but this did not discourage Abhe Singh's forces who entered Bikaner, mercilessly looted it, and

1. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 49
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 63-64.

besieged the fort.[1]

It is believed that Karniji was rendering protection to her votaries, the people of Bikaner. She manifested herself in the shape of a white kite[2], seen first by two Parihars from the Sur Mandir inside the fort. They at once reported this extraordinary phenomenon to the Maharaja who came hurriedly to the spot, saw the strange bird, offered prayers and fed it with sweetmeats. Others also prayed to the Devi for the destruction of the enemy. After having eaten and circled round the fort, this venerable bird flew away towards Deshnoke. The defenders of the fort felt reassured and redoubled their efforts against the enemy.[3]

Bakhat Singh of Nagor offered to help Zorawar Singh. Zorawar Singh sent Anand Ram to Bakhat Singh who had earlier offered help to Bikaner, apprising him of the situation in Bikaner and suggesting that the fort could be relieved by pressure on the besiegers from without. Bakhat Singh and Anand Ram sought the help of Maharaja Jai Singh of Jaipur who sent a force of twenty thousand under Rajmal Khatri to march on Jodhpur. Later, Jai Singh also marched against Jodhpur with a force of three lacs. When Abhe Singh came to know of this, he was so perturbed that he raised the siege of Bikaner and sped towards Jodhpur with two thousand horse lest he should be too late in saving his State. While so retreating, he was pursued by

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1. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 50
2. The white kite has been considered a sacred bird by the Rathores. The kite has been taken as an embellishment on the monograms of Jodhpur and Bikaner. In Rajasthan, the kite is associated with the Devi and the white kite, in particular, is associated with Devi Karniji. The white kite has always been regarded as ominous and harbinger of good fortune. At the temple of Shri Karniji, thousands of Kabas - a variety of rat found only in the temple af Deshnoke -are seen running around freely. Amongst them a few white kabas are occasionally seen and their being seen by one is regarded by the devotees as a sign of very good luck, same as that of the white kite.
3. Powlett, Op.cit. pp. 50-51

Bikaner troops. But Jai Singh had no intention of securing any territorial gain at the expense of Jodhpur and all that he sought was to restore the status quo and obtain a peshkash which was fixed at Rs.21 lacs.[1] Zorawar Singh came to Banar in Jodhpur and met Jai Singh to express his gratitude for the help extended to him.[2]

Bakhat Singh had, as a result of the assistance of Jai Singh against the invasion of Jodhpur, begun to cherish the hope of securing the gaddi of Jodhpur for himself. But when Jai Singh returned after collecting the peshkash only, Bakhat Singh became dissatisfied and began to harbour ill will towards Jai Singh. He made friends with Abhe Singh and marched upon Dhundhad. On hearing the news, Jai Singh also marched his forces against him and after some fighting Bakhat Singh was driven away. Bakhat Singh fled to Alaniawas where Abhe Singh was stationed at the time. Jai Singh also advanced further and on reaching Ajmer, challenged Abhe Singh for a fight, at the same time sending word to Zorawar Singh to join him. Zorawar Singh led his troops on Nagor and plundered it but did not proceed to join Jai Singh at Ajmer.[3]

After some time Thakur Bhim Singh of Mahajan, a jagirdar of Bikaner, obtained permission from Zorawar Singh to capture Bhatner, which was being held by Mala Godara. Bhim Singh had Mala murdered treacherously and occupied Bhatner in 1740. When Zorawar Singh learnt of this, he asked Hasan Khan Bhatti to capture Bhatner and after some fighting Hasan Khan occupied Bhatner.[4]

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1. Powlett, Op.cit. pp.51-52
2. Ibid p.52
3. Ibid, p. 53
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 67-68
4. Powlett, Op.cit. pp.49-50.

The Bhattis and Johiyas had again started trouble in the districts bordering upon Hissar from where these tribes used to make their incursions into the Bikaner territory. Zorawar Singh, therefore, decided to take possession of Hissar. Troops were got ready and stationed at Nohar under Kanwar Gaj Singh[1] and Shekhawat Nahar Singh and Mehta Bakhtawar Singh. Before leading his troops on his expedition against Hissar he went to the shrine of Karniji.[2]

One of the Ranis of Zorawar Singh had been on a pilgrimage to Soram Ghat on the Ganges. This party had to pass through the territory of Rao Ahir Gujjar Mal of Rewari who proposed that the two together might capture Hissar. This opportunity was taken to establish Bikaner's alliance with this chief with a view to the intended invasion of Hissar. The Rao on his part, launched his attack, but Bikaner's aid was delayed in reaching the Rao owing to some internal disturbances within Bikaner and Bakhat Singh's hostility against his old ally. At length a force was sent under Bakhtawar Singh Mehta and Daulat Singh, Thakur of Bai, which marched towards Hansi, while the Maharaja occupied Hissar. At the same time another force acted against the Bhattis of Fatehabad who were subdued.[3]

On his way back from the Hissar expedition, Zorawar Singh returned via Bhatner where he obtained from its chief, Mohammad Bhatti, the promise of peshkash (tribute). When he halted at Anuppura, he fell ill[4] and died on the 15th May, 1746[5] after four days' ailment, not without suspicion of having been poisoned.

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1. Son of Zorawar Singh.
2. Powlett, Op.cit. p.53. He sent his family to the shrine ahead of himself to walk the distance bare-footed. Then he followed them and walked from the border of the wood upto the shrine accompanied by his Ranis who were united to him in a row by knots in their scarves (Gath-bandhan or Gath-jori). A golden umbrella was offered to Karniji (it is said to be still there) and food, money and blanket were distributed among the people of the locality. Charan women who sang hymns were given a necklace each.
3. Powlett, Op.cit. p.54
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 68
4. Powlett, Op.cit. p.54
5. Inscription on the memorial cenotaph.

The Mughal power had, by now, been practically shattered and was a mere shadow. It could no longer exercise its controlling influence and thus to depend upon any effective help from that quarter against the external attack of Jodhpur or the internal revolts was to live in a fool's paradise. Zorawar Singh, however, was too shrewd not to realise the situation and, therefore, took the first opportunity that offered of winning over his neighbours so as to make his position more secure. Thus, though Bakhat Singh had at one time invaded Bikaner yet when the hand of friendship was extended by him to Zorawar Singh, it was readily grasped. Jai Singh, the Maharaja of Jaipur, was also won over and the task was made easier, as Jai Singh bore animosity towards Abhe Singh of Jodhpur. Zorawar Singh realised full well that the solidarity of a State consists in the contentment of its jagirdars whose submission to law and order was all the more necessary in the state of affairs then existing. Hence it is that we find that though he had often to adopt repressive measures against some of the recalcitrant sardars, he generally let them off after reprimand or exacting peshkash.

Mohammad Shah still regarded Bikaner as one of the dependable adherants to the Mughal throne. He, therefore, made a gesture of friendship, for whatever it was worth, by assuring Zorawar Singh that he would not be allowed to be captured by Abhe Singh. Zorawar Singh, however, did not hesitate to attack the troublesome Bhattis in Hansi and Hissar where he had to cross swords with the emperor's troops.

Zorawar Singh died without an issue. But his younger brother Abhey Singh had two sons, Amar Singh and Gaj Singh. At the time of Zorawar Singh's death, Thakur Kushal Singh and Mehta Bakhtawar Singh secured the fort and the city and gave anxious care to the selection from among the relatives of the ruling family, of a suitable successor to the gaddi of Bikaner. The two sons of Abhey Singh, supported by Bakhat Singh, took

the field and marched upon Bikaner. They encamped at Ladnu on the border from where they made ravaging incursions. Kushal Singh sent them a messenger with a special ring as his credential and invited them to a conference at Gadhwala. Both the brothers came in response to this invitation and each encamped under a Khejra tree, at a distance from each other. The younger brother, Gaj Singh, was the abler of the two and was also favoured by Kushal Singh. But it was left to be decided by interpreting omens. The omens indicated that the one who had encamped under the tree called Bhumia Khejra being dedicated to Bhumdhani (lord of the land) should be selected as the Maharaja. Gaj Singh was thereupon secretly summoned to Bikaner and offered the gaddi with stipulation that on assuming the reins of government, he should not ask Kushal Singh and Bakhtawar Singh to render any account for the expenditure of stores and treasures during the siege of Bikaner by Abhe Singh. Gaj Singh gave the promise and was installed as the fourteenth ruler of Bikaner in September, 1746.[1] Amar Singh, the elder brother, was disappointed and left Bikaner. But he was not going to sleep over his disappointment. He repaired to Ajmer where several others discontented with Bikaner had also gathered. Eventually, in 1747, Amar Singh with the assistance of Jodhpur forces, marched on Bikaner but was unable to break through the Maharaja's resistance and had to retreat leaving innumerable dead and wounded.[2]

During that period, the Bidawats had begun to cause much trouble and, therefore, Gaj Singh sent for Mohabat Singh, Devi Singh and Sangram Singh, the ringleaders while he was staying at Chhapar and had them murdered. This restored peace in the territory.[3]

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1. Nainsi, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.201
2. Memorial inscription found near Bhandasar Jain temple, Bikaner as quoted by Dr. Ojha in his History of the Bikaner State, Vol. I, p.325.
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp. 55-56
3. Powlett, Op.cit. p.56

Since Bakhat Singh nursed a grudge against Abhe Singh, he sought the hand of friendship from Gaj Singh which was readily extended. With a view to seeking the emperor's assistance also in his projected invasion of Jodhpur, Bakhat Singh went to Delhi and secured aid. He then halted at Sambhar on his way back and asked Gaj Singh to meet him there. On hearing this, Abhe Singh sought the help of the Marathas and the joint forces marched against Bakhat Singh, but the situation was saved with the timely intervention of the Maharaja of Jaipur.[1] Similarly, on other occasions whenever there was a call from Bakhat Singh for assistance, Gaj Singh always came to his help.[2]

The Marwar Thakurs except the Mertias urged upon Bakhat Singh now to strive for the gaddi of Jodhpur. A great battle was fought at Dudasar Tank near Merta in 1750 in which Ram Singh was defeated. Inspite of the heavy loss suffered by Ram Singh, he made another stand, but this too proved a failure and Ram Singh had to retreat to Jodhpur.[3] Bakhat Singh in conjunction with Gaj Singh easily demolished the defences of Jodhpur and took possession of the city in 1751. For half a day the city was given to plunder. The Bhattis who held the upper fort of Jodhpur surrendered it to Bakhat Singh. The victorious chief entered the fort and Maharaja Gaj Singh led his friend to the Darbar hall and hailing him as the Maharaja of Jodhpur asked him to ascendd the gaddi. Bakhat Singh yielding the place of precedence to his cousin, friend and ally, Maharaja Gaj Singh, said that it was all due to him that he was becoming the ruler of Jodhpur. Having accomplished this Gaj Singh returned to Bikaner.[4]

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1. Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.504
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp.56-57
2. Gaj Singh's forces fought with Bakhat Singh's forces against Ram Singh (who had succeeded Abhe Singh to the gaddi of Jodhpur) at Reni and again at Suriawas.
3. Powlett, Op.cit. pp.58-59
4. Powlett, Op.cit. p.59
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.504-505

In 1752, Gaj Singh sent Mundhra Amar Singh to subdue the Shekhawats. The Nawab of Daulatpur also joined Gaj Singh's forces at the instance of Bakhat Singh. The rebels were subdued and peace restored.[1]

The Mughal emperor's authority had become too weak to maintain control over distant territories. The pargana of Hissar became unmanageable under the weak rule of Ahmed Shah. He therefore assigned it to Gaj Singh in 1752. Mehta Bakhtawar Singh[2] was deputed by the Bikaner ruler to administer this pargana.[3]

Bakhat Singh, ruler of Jodhpur, died the same year(August, 1752). Gaj Singh, thereupon, recognised his son Vijai Singh as his successor in the rulership of Jodhpur.

The emperor's authority was defied even within the walls of Delhi. Gaj Singh received urgent calls from emperor Ahmed Shah to come to his rescue against his wazir (Mansur Ali Khan of Safdarjang) who had rebelled against him. Gaj Singh at once sent Bakhtawar Singh from Hissar along with an army of about 7500 fighting men. Bakhtawar Singh was received with honour by the emperor and he was so pleased with Gaj Singh for his prompt aid that he granted a mansab of seven thousand zat and five thousand horse[4] together with a magnificent Khilat as well as the title "Sri Raj Rajeshwar Maharajadhiraj Maharaja Siromani Gaj Singh". This title was engraved on the Raj seal. To the Maharaja's eldest son a mansab of four thousand zat and two thousand horse was granted[5] and to Mehta Bakhtawar Singh was given the title of Rao with a mansab of four thousand zat and one thousand horse and a Khilat.[6] The Maharaja's new title now began to be mentioned in all documents and inscriptions etc.

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1. Powlett, Op.cit. p.60
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 76
2. Mehta Bakhtawar Singh was a minister of Maharaja Gaj Singh.
3. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 61
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 77
4. Ahmed Shah's farman dated 2nd Shawwal, 6,
5. Ibid
6. Ibid.

Vijai Singh succeeded to the gaddi of Jodhpur in 1752 on the death of his father Bakhat Singh who had taken same from Ram Singh in 1751 with the help of Gaj Singh.[1] Soon after his accession, Vijai Singh asked for Gaj Singh's help against the intended attack on Jodhpur by Ram Singh with the assistance of the Marathas. Gaj Singh with his forces reached Jodhpur, but the attack did not take place.[2] Soon after, however, the Scindia invaded Marwar. Ram Singh with his forces also joined the Scindia. At this time Madho Singh was on the gaddi of Jaipur and was at first inclined to secure the gaddi of Jodhpur for Ram Singh. But when Vijai Singh suffered defeat at the hands of the Scindia[3] and approached Madho Singh for assistance, he not only himself proceeded to Vijai Singh's help but also called for help from Bikaner. The Bikaner forces under Mehta Bakhtawar Singh joined Madho Singh and his forces at Didwana. The Marathas, however, successfully blocked the advance of this force and Vijai Singh had to flee.[4] Vijai Singh took shelter with Gaj Singh at Bikaner and after some time both of them went to Jaipur to seek the assistance of Madho Singh for regaining Jodhpur.[5] But, Madho Singh had again become inclined in favour of Ram Singh and he not only did not come forward to their assistance but also planned to cause friction between Gaj Singh and Vijai Singh by trying to win Gaj Singh over with an assurance of having the eighty-four villages in Phalodi restored to him. As Gaj Singh did not fall a prey to these machinations, Madho Singh even tried to have Vijai Singh murdered.[6]

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1. Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p. 504,
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp.59-60
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 75
2. Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.505
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 60
3. Tod, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.1061-63
4. Samal Das.Opcit. Vol. II, pp. 505-506
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.62
5. Jodhpur Rajya ki Khyat Vol. II, p.196
6. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 79-81
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp.62-63
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.506

In 1756 Gaj Singh successfully subdued the rebellious Shekhawat Thakurs Nawal Singh and Bhupal Singh with the help of Kachhawa Raghunath Singh of Jaipur.[1] The same year he had to send Daulat Singh and Mehta Madho Rai to quell the Sikh rebellion at Nohar. Thereafter Gaj Singh despatched his forces against the Thakur of Bhadra and later the Maharaja led a large army in person against the Thakur who subsequently surrendered and his jagir was restored to him. Then Gaj Singh marched upon Rawatsar, and the Rawat, Anand Singh, also surrendered.[2]

Alamgir II, who, at this time, was the emperor at Delhi came to Sirsa where Lal Singh, the Thakur of Bhadra and Daulat Singh, the Thakur of Bai went to pay him homage. They also wrote to Gaj Singh to come to Sirsa but he decided not to go.[3]

About the same time, Vijai Singh asked for monetary assistance and Gaj Singh immediately remitted Rs.50,000/- to him.[4] On another occasion Vijai Singh sought Gaj Singh's help to subjugate Zorawar Singh of Khinwsar.[5] Gaj Singh proceeded to Khinwsar and succeeded in inducing Zorawar Singh to accept the overlordship of Vijai Singh.[6]

In 1759-60, the Bhattis and the Johiyas again reverted to their lawless activities. Hussain, a Bhatti leader, had captured Bhatner from Ami Mohammad, the Johiya head, On hearing the news, Gaj Singh immediately proceeded to Nohar from where

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1. Powlett, Op.cit. p.65
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 84
2. Powlett, Op.cit. pp.65-66
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 85-86
3. Powlett, Op.cit. p.66
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 86
4. Ibid.
5. Jagir in the present Nagor district of Jodhpur State, approximately halfway between Bikaner and Jodhpur. The Thakur of this village is the head of the Karamsot clan.
6. Powlett, Op.cit. p.66
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 87-88

he despatched Mehta Bakhtawar Singh with a force to Bhatner. Bakhtawar Singh settled the issue amicably.[1]

At the same time news were received of Daud-putras[2] having invaded and occupied Anupgarh. The Maharaja immediately proceeded against them and captured Anupgarh.[3] In 1763 again the Daud-putras and Ikhtiar Khan, of the same clan, treacherously took possession of Nohar. Gaj Singh sent his forces under the command of Shah Moolchand and others. When Gaj Singh's forces reached Anupgarh, the Daud-putras and Johiyas offered to make peace but the terms were rejected by the Bikaner sardars. The Johiyas went back but made a sudden night attack in which the Bikaner troops lost heavily and Shah Mool Chand had to sue for peace. Thereupon the Johiyas retreated and Mool Chand re-established Gaj Singh's authority in the area.[4] In 1767 when Vijai Singh entered into alliance with Jawahar Mal of Bharatpur, Gaj Singh was displeased; and when Vijai Singh informed him that resenting this alliance, Madho Singh had become hostile and sought Gaj Singh's assistance, Gaj Singh sent word that he would side with Madho Singh.[5]

In 1772 Gaj Singh went to Nathdwara. The Maharana also went there and opened the subject of Vijai Singh refusing to vacate Godwad. Gaj Singh tried to persuade Vijai Singh to vacate Godwad, but did not succeed.[6] On return from Nathdwara, Gaj Singh had to subdue the rebellious Rawat of Rawatsar and the

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1. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 67
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II fol. 88
2. The Bhawalpuris.
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 88
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.67
4. Powlett, Op.cit. pp. 67-68
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 89
5. Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.506
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.68
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 90
6. Ojha; Rajputane ka Itihas, Vol. II, p.970

Thakurs of Baru and Tekhra. The fort of Tekhra was occupied and Thakur of Baru surrendered.[1] In 1773, the Bhattis again created trouble but when Gaj Singh marched his forces against them, Mohammad Hassan Khan surrendered and made peace.[2]

There was a minor rift between Gaj Singh and his son Raj Singh. The latter was actively helped against his father by Nawal Singh Shekhawat, Thakur Hari Singh of Churu and some Bidawat and Bhati clansmen. Gaj Singh broke this combination and after some time Raj Singh was taken prisoner. Raj Singh fell ill and Gaj Singh also fell ill. Their differences were now patched. Raj Singh was later restored to health and Gaj Singh before breathing his last on 25th March, 1787, summoned his son Raj Singh and handed over the government to him as his successor.[3]

Gaj Singh amply justified his rulership of Bikaner in preference to his elder brother. The foregoing account amply proves that Gaj Singh was a capable administrator and courageous soldier. He put down insubordination and rebellion with an iron hand. He was ever ready to pardon rebels who submitted to him but he did not hesitate to imprison even his own son Raj Singh or extirpate those who obstinately refused to submit. He always stood by his friends through thick and thin. He was held in high esteem by all the Rajput princes who sought his advice and mediation whenever confronted with difficult problems in their inter-state affairs.

Even in the waning days of the Mughal Empire when the emperor of Delhi had come to be a mere symbol, Gaj Singh true to the oath of fidelity to the Mughal emperor never attempted to act against the interests of the Mughal emperor. Reciprocally, the Mughal emperor also maintained an attitude of

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1. Powlett, Op.cit. p.71
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. vol. II, fol. 93
2. Ibid.
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 94
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.72

respect and confidence in him though he never attended the court at Delhi. The emperor awarded him the high title "Sri Raj Rajeshwar Maharajadhiraj Shiromani" as well as the insignia of Mahi-o-Maratib.

Gaj Singh always strove to make his people happy and prosperous. He increased the income of the State by exercising strict control over revenue collection and expenditure. He himself never indulged in any wasteful expenditure for maintaining a lavish court.

Raj Singh, the fifteenth ruler, was born in 1744. He sat on the gaddi of Bikaner twelve days after the death of his father Gaj Singh on 4th April, 1787. Soon after the cremation of the body of their deceased father the other three sons of Gaj Singh, Sultan Singh, Mokhan Singh and Ajab Singh left Bikaner and went to Jodhpur. They feared that Raj Singh, now that he was the Maharaja, would punish them for their having played him false and had him imprisoned. Another brother Surtan Singh who had not participated in the treacherous act of the other brothers continued to live in Bikaner.

Raj Singh was suffering from a mortal disease and therefore could not attend to the business of the State. He, therefore, entrusted the government to his trusted sardar Mansukh Nahta. Raj Singh lived only for twenty one days after becoming Maharaja. He died on 25th April, 1787. Pratap Singh, the elder of the two minor sons[1] of Raj Singh succeeded to the gaddi as the sixteenth ruler of Bikaner on his father's demise but he also died soon after.[2]

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1. Raj Singh had two sons, Pratap Singh and Jai Singh.
2. Tod, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.1138
   Dayal Das in his Khyat (vol. II fol. 95) however, mentions that Pratap Singh had died of small pox at the age of six. Powlett in his Gazetteer of the Bikaner State (p.73) also mentions that Pratap Singh was alive at the time of his father's death but was murdered by his uncle Surat Singh.
   The accession of Pratap Singh is also corroborated by a letter dated 5th June, 1787 written by Krishnaji, the Maratha officer posted at Jodhpur, to his master and referred to by D.B. Parasnis in his Historical Collections (Maratha) Vol. VI, pp.113-14 quoted by Ojha in his Bikaner Rajya ka Itihas, Vol. II, p.363

The period from the accession of Sarup Singh to the death of Pratap Singh represents perhaps the darkest phase of Rajput history. The Mughal power was now only a myth. It could no longer perform its functions of uniting and controlling the empire which it had been doing since the time of Akbar down to the time of Bahadur Shah. The result was that personal ambitions, land hunger and inter-state rivalries which had been kept under check so long, now blazed forth. Contests for primacy, specially between the Kachhawas and the Rathores took a turn for the worse and the princely States of Rajputana became scenes of disorder, and destruction. This was the time when, taking advantage of these conditions the Marathas were thinking of building up an empire of their own and the European traders had embarked upon the adventurous policy of planting the British flag over their spheres of influence. But the Rajputs despite their proximity to the imperial seat of the tottering Mughal empire could not think of building an empire for themselves. Though during the time of the imperial Mughals, they had conquered distant lands, administered vast tracts and rendered yeoman service for the consolidation of the Mughal empire, they could not muster themselves to take advantage of the situation mainly because of their personal jealousies and inter-state rivalries.

It was when these dark clouds were hovering over Rajputana that we find the rulers of Bikaner, while still playing fair to their pledge of faithfulness to the nominal Mughal emperors, maintaining a virtual independence and aligning themselves with the neighbouring princes according to the exigencies of the time. And yet, their faithfulness to the emperors did not deter them from crossing swords with the imperial troops when occasion arose as in the case of their invasion of Hissar. But friendly relations were maintained and we find that Shah Alam conferred mansabs, Mahi-o-Maratib and title on Gaj Singh, his Rajkumar Raj Singh and Diwan Bakhtawar Singh and that Mohammad Shah assured Zorawar Singh

of his assistance against the invasion of Abhe Singh over Bikaner. These gestures were also reciprocated by the rulers of Bikaner for we find that when Wazir Mansur Ali Khan rebelled against the authority of Ahmad Shah and Ahmad Shah· asked for help, Gaj Singh immediately sent a detachment under Mehta Bakhtawar Singh to SDelhi.

A survey of relationship which had been established between the rulers of Bikaner and the House of Timur goes to reveal that during the period of close upon two hundred years from the time when Bikaner was founded as a separate kingdom, independent of the parent kingdom of Jodhpur, the Bikaner State and its rulers, through successive generations, enjoyed a high Izzat, dignity and rank, status and prestige. They wielded considerable political and military power and influence. There is no denying the fact that Bikaner always ranked among the premier States of Rajputana. The exceptionally high rank of Bikaner amongst the most important and senior States of India in the days of the Mughal empire has been proved by the facts of history.

The course of negotiations conducted between the imperial Mughals and the Rathore rulers of Bikaner establish the fact that the State of Bikaner did not grow out of a Jagir granted by any overlord. The State was founded prior to the Mughal period as an independent kingdom by the strong arm and sword, the indomitable bravery against heavy odds, and the invincible courage and resolute endurance of Bika even in the face of innumerable dangers and the gravest hardships. It was thus by right of conquest and one long continuous fight against even nature itself that the rulers of Bikaner were able to retain their heritage. The Rathore rulers of Bikaner played an important part in the history of Mughal empire. They sealed their fidelity with their own blood and rendered military services to the cause of the Mughal empire. They stand second to none in the manifestation of those magnificent qualities which alone help a dynasty in consolidating its conquests. The

rulers of Bikaner maintained their extensive possessions in the course of some sixty different wars and campaigns.

The first ruler who came in contact with the Mughals was Rao Kalyanmal, the fifth ruler of Bikaner, who had been granted a mansab of two thousand. He received his mansab in 1570, at least thirteen years earlier than the ruler of Jodhpur who received his mansab in 1583 and it is believed that the ruler of Bikaner received the imperial mansab before all the Hindu princes with the single exception of the ruler of Amer. The ruler of Bikaner also received from the Mughal emperor the title of Raja, at least eleven years before the ruler of Jodhpur did so. Raja Rai Singh was given high command in the great expedition against Gujerat where he distinguished himself in the assault of the city by slaying the governor, Mirza Mohammad Hussain, in single combat. Rai Singh had occupied Jodhpur for several years and it was as a result of his personal intercession that Jodhpur was restored to Udai Singh. The ruler of Bikaner at the court of Akbar enjoyed higher rank and precedence than those of the then existing Hindu principalities throughout the length and breadth of India with the sole exception of Jaipur. On several occasions the rulers of Bikaner had had the highest honours conferred upon them by the Mughal emperors. The Mahi-o-Maratib was conferred upon the rulers of Bikaner on no less than three occasions,[1] by the emperors of Delhi. the Nalki[2] too, though not so rare an honour had likewise been conferred upon the rulers of Bikaner.

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1. This honour was conferred upon (i) Maharaja Anup Singh; (ii) Maharaja Gaj Singh; and (iii) Maharaja Ratan Singh.

2. Nalki is an octagonal or square shaped palinquin, with two or more handles fore and aft. Sleeman in his "Rambles and Recollections of an Indian official" writes that it was one of the three great insignias conferred upon independent princes of the first class and Great Territorial Sovereigns of the country.

For a full understanding of the relations between the House of Bikaner and the Mughals, it is necessary to examine briefly the impact of Muslim culture on the life of the rulers and people of Bikaner.

Bikaner was situated on the important trade route from Kabul to India and travellers and caravans passed that way offering many opportunities for exchange of ideas. The influence of Mughals was also felt on the administration of the State. This was extended to the military strategy employed by the Bikaner armies. In the field of art, culture, literature, painting and sports, this impact is seen everywhere. Bikaner being only 250 miles from Delhi, it was not possible to escape the dominating influence of the culture brought from Persia by the Mughals and implanted on the minds of the Indian people. Akbar followed a policy of religious toleration and friendship and tried by various means to win over the Rajputs. He elevated them by giving them high izzats and mansabs. In some cases marriages were also contracted between Rajput princesses and Mughal rulers. Thus the Rajput princes became more closely connected with the Mughal emperors and often played an important role in the privilege of king-making. Akbar's policy was based more on winning over the rulers of Rajputana more by friendly methods than by war - a policy in which he greatly succeeded.

The use of gun powder seems to have been introduced in Bikaner during this period and we come across the use of artillery for the first time during the reign of Maharaja Zorawar Singh. A close association with the Mughals made a notable contribution towards the development of fine arts both in architecture and in painting. In many cases by copying Mughal architecture, and in some cases bringing about a fusion of Mughal with the original Hindu art of Rajputana, a very interesting Indosaracenic architectural development was brought into being in Bikaner. Magnificient buildings were erected in Bikaner including the famous Juna Gadh fort built by Maharaja Rai Singh in the year 1594. The Bikaner fort today boasts of many



Kakubha Ragini (Miniature, Maharaja Gaj Singh's reign, 1745-87)

architectural beauties which would remind a historian of Fatehpur Sikri and the Red Fort at Delhi. The fort itself is constructed according to the military standards of the time. The carved wooden door leading to Har Mandir closely resembles what are called the Akbari-doors. The style of the buildings constructed during the reign of Sur Singh (1612-31), such as the Sur Sagar tank and the Sur Mandir, represent the Mughal architecture of the time of Akbar. The Chhatri of Maharaja Karan Singh (1631-69) at Devikund Sagar is a fine example of the Fatehpur Sikri style. Karniji's temple at Deshnoke and especially its oldest part which is still standing, represents the Akbari-Mughal tradition. Anup Singh (1669-98) is known to have been not only a great warrior but also a great scholar and connoiseur of arts. In the buildings constructed during his reign, the use of decorated white marble representing the style of Shah Jahan is evident. This effect is clearly manifest in the two storeys of white marble arcades laid before the rooms constructed during the period of Sur Singh and Karan Singh. But during the reign of Surat Singh (1787-1828) the decline becomes obvious. This decline marks a gradual process from the time of Sujan Singh (1700-1736) when the Mughal power had become weak and the political links between the two powers were loosened.

The famous Bikaner collection of miniature paintings made by famous Mughal Ustas of that time has been praised by art lovers throughout the world. These Ustas who settled in Bikaner during the Mughal period introduced the fine work of the Mughal Kalam from which the Bikaner Kalam developed in due course. The foreign influence gradually disappeared merging into the Hindu style of paintings. It is under Maharaja Karan Singh that we find that a distinct school of Bikaner painting began to develop. Bikaner was famous for its carpet industry. Even to this day the Mughal influence on the Bikaner carpets which are produced on a fine pile in Persian style, can be seen.

Maharaja Anup Singh became famous for the richly decorated

works he carried out in the fort and apparently they were influenced by Shah Jahan, the great builder; and the Anup Mahal in Bikaner fort, with its golden pen-work is an exquisite piece of work and easily one of the best exhibits of its kind, retaining its original freshness in gold painted decorations on the walls and carvings. Maharaja Anup Singh was a great patron of literature and the famous Anup Sanskrit library with nearly ten thousand manuscripts and rare works of various descriptions can be seen in Bikaner.

Maharaja Karan Singh had the famous Karan Mahal built in the fort at Bikaner. It was used as the Darbar Hall till very recently and would remind a traveller of similar Darbare halls in the Red Forts of Agra and Delhi. The Mughal influence was also seen on the social life of the people. Many a custom and ceremonial were copied from the Mughals and have come to stay. In the matter of dress not only the rulers but the gentry as well, adopted certain Mughal styles, and a few items of dress as for example the cloak and tight trousers were borrowed from the Mughals. Hindu women wore sarees while Muslim women wore long payajamas or ghagras and jackets.

Sports and games, such as Chopar, Shatranj (Chess), hunting and hawking, also of Mughal origin, were introduced in Bikaner. Food and drink were also greatly influenced by the Mughal impact. Some of the unfortunate changes that came about as a result of Mughal influence were the customs of Purdah and poligamy. Both these harmful customs played a great part in reducing women to subjugation. Purdah continued amongst the Rajputs down to the time of Integration, and even today vestiges of this unfortunate custom can be seen amongst the Rajput families.

Inspite of this impact on the life of the people of Bikaner it is interesting to note that Bikaner was fortunate enough to retain its original culture as well, and with the fading away of the Mughals from the political arena of India, Bikaner swung back rapidly towards its own culture.

The rudimentary revenue system of the Bikaner State could not escape the influence of the Mughal system which was a highly developed one. We hear of the first revenue settlement in the time of Sher Shah. In later years, Akbar himself brought about four or five revenue experiments. Broadly speaking the territories of the Rajputana rulers consisted of two different types: (1) Watans or the heriditary principalities; and (2) the jagirs granted by the Mughal rulers in mansab. So far as the lands of the jagirdari grants were concerned, the revenue system in force in those mahals or parganas was the same as in the rest of the sarkar and suba of which they formed part;of Bikaner the system was similar to that of the suba of Ajmer.

In order to avoid the administrative difficulties of having two different sets of rules and organisations for the collection of revenues, one for the mansab jagirs and another for the heriditary territories, it was thought expedient to adopt, as far as possible the Mughal organisation. It is thus that we find that like the Amils of the Mughal organisation, Rajputana had the counter-officer known the Chirayat, whose function was to collect the revenues. There was, however, one significant difference in the two systems. In the Mughal system known as the Ryotwari system, emphasis was laid on direct collection from the cultivators and the avoidance of the intermediary. In the State, the Chirayat would collect the dues from the Thakurs or their bankers and they in turn were at liberty to realise the same from the cultivators. Another difference was that whereas in the Mughal system the demand was worked out from statistics compiled after due survey of the land and consideration of the quality and quantity of the produce, in the State the same was fixed arbitrarily by the Chirayats. It may be mentioned here that the Rajput States of Rajputana, though falling mostly under ~~the category~~ Suba Ajmer, were not actually a part of the Suba. The rulers of these States including Bikaner, were not under the Mughal governor of Ajmer. They enjoyed complete autonomy and had direct relations with the emperor. The only connection that some of the Rajput States

namely, those which paid tribute to the Mughals, was that the amount of the tribute was deposited in the treasury of the suba. In the case of Bikaner, no tribute had ever been paid.

It would be interesting to study the influence, if any, that the Mughal system had on the administration of the Bikaner State. The administrative set up of Bikaner, as also the Rajput States in Rajputana in general, for that matter, was in fact based on the ancient Hindu administrative institutions which had sprung up and developed from 300 B.C. to A.D. 1100 and it is to the credit of these Rajput States that these institutions were preserved. The occupation of certain parts of Rajputana by Ala Uddin Khilji and later by Sher Shah did not last long and was nominal and hence there was no appreciable impact of the Muslim system on the administrative set up of Bikaner. Though according to Qanungo, Sher Shah introduced many new institutions in the system of administration, later opinion is that Sher Shah could, at best, be said to have introduced certain reforms only; Sher Shah was not an innovator but only a reformer. Akbar improved on these. But essentially, the system whether modelled on foreign forms of government, was in many ways akin to the ancient system prevailing in India. The idea of kingship was basically the same. The institution of Diwans or ministers to advise the kings was very much the same. The system of distributing the territories into small sizeable administrative units, namely, the Subas, sarkars, and parganas was a great deal akin to the ancient Hindu system; so much so that the appointment of the princes of royal blood as subedars or governors was in line with the appointment of princes as the viceroys during the Maurya period. The only significant change that is noticeable is in terminology which appears to have borrowed many Persian words from the Mughals. The administrative system of Bikaner State during the Mughal period, therefore, remained basically unaffected by the Mughal impact.

CHAPTER VI

Bikaner's early relations with the British

We now enter upon the crucial stage of the relations of the House of Bikaner with the new Central Power which was being established by the British. In order to appreciate the relationship that grew between the House of Bikaner and the British Central Power, it is necessary to have a proper perspective of the policy followed by the Central Power during this period generally as also the internal conditions prevailing in Bikaner. An attempt, has therefore, been made in the next few paragraphs to give very briefly an analysis of the policies followed by the British; and the conditions prevailing in the State at different times are detailed in their proper places. It should be understood, however, that these alliances with the rulers of India made by the British could not be taken in isolation and State-wise, because the conditions were in many cases similar where rulers required the assistance and protection of the superior power to solve their internal problems, and the British power was on the ascendant.

During the later portion of the eighteenth century and the earlier part of the nineteenth century, the political conditions in India were unstable and it was difficult to maintain a political balance.[1] The British East India Company

1. Thompson; The Making of the Indian Princes, Preface, pp.v-vi

According to Thompson, India's political framework was made in twenty years; in 1799-1819, between the death of Tipu Sultan and the elimination of the Peshwa. The period opens with the destruction of the Muslim State of Mysore and ends with the disintegration of the Maratha confederacy into a series of chieftaincies. These two conquests gave the British the control of India. It was only after the final defeat of the Marathas that modern India was formed and its map in essentials drawn. Modern India was made in the space of these twenty years, first by the shattering of what Lord Wellesley styled, "the Maratha Empire" and then, after a brief period of uncertain and faltering doctrine, by Lord Hastings' firm establishment of the States which had survived. During these twenty years the political conditions in India remained unstable and as such it was difficult to maintain diplomatic balance.

had, consequently, to embark upon a policy of conquest inspite of the passing of Pitt's India Act of 1784 which specifically said that no new territories were to be annexed.[1] Lord Cornwallis annexed half of Mysore and Lord Wellesley even wiped out its existence. He further asserted British supremacy through his subsidiary alliances. Lord Hastings continued this policy even with greater zeal. Even after 1818 we find that strenuous efforts were made to conquer new territories of the Punjab, Afghanistan Sindh, Burma and the north-west.

Thus, despite a show of non-intervention, the British followed vigorously a policy of conquest and during its course had to enter into various alliances and engagements with the Indian States. Though the expansionist policy of the British underwent many changes from time to time, its underlying motive remained unchanged: it continued to strive to strengthen and perpetuate the hold of the British in India. Their initial motive was to secure protection of their maritime and commercial interests and later, to counteract the power and influence of their European rivals in India.[2] After the defeat of the French in 1763, which ousted them from the Indian scene finally, the relations of the British with the Indian powers entered a new stage. From 1757 to 1813, they followed a policy of Ringfence, and later that of subordinate isolation. From 1858, the policy of subordinate alliance guided the attitude of the British towards the Indian States.[3] These three phases represent, from the point of view of the Indian States, the three phases of (i) British security; (ii) British ascendancy; and (iii) British Empire.

During the first period, the treaties were made on an

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1. 24 Geo.III C.25
   cf. K.N. Chopra; Law Relating to the Protection of the administration of States in India, p.5
2. Ibid, p.7
3. Lee Warner, The Native States of India, pp.43, 58-59, 96 and 157-161

equal and independent basis and were governed by considerations of reciprocity. The Indian States had as a matter of fact been tolerated as, according to Elphinstone, they could "afford a refuge to all those whose habits of war, intrigue or depredation did not allow them to live as peaceful citizens in British India."[1] The British had hoped that the stronger organisations would absorb the weaker ones and become settled States but finding their expectations not ~~to be~~ turning true, they adopted a policy of conquest and subsidiary alliance, more oY less as a means to self-preservation primarily as safeguard against the rival European powers in India viz. the French and the Russians.[2]

From 1813 to 1858 the British followed a policy of isolation and subordinate cooperation.[3] The policy of non-interference was completely given up and efforts were made to ensure that every Indian State became a subordinate ally. Lord Hastings even went a step further and aimed at keeping the

1. Indian Reform Tract Series IV, The Native States of India, p.18
   Thompson, The Making of the Indian Princes, p. 271
   Colebrooke; Life of Elphinstone, Vol. II, p.315

   Elphinstone, in evidence before the House of Commons on Indian affairs, 1832, put this with characteristic clearness. "It appears to me to be our interest as well as our duty to use every means to preserve the allied governments; it is also our interest to keep up the number of independent powers: their territories afford a refuge to all those whose habits of war, intrigue, or depredation, make them incapable of remaining quiet in ours; and the contrast of our government has a favourable effect on our subjects, who, while they feel the evils, they are actually exposed to, are apt to forget the greater ones from which they have been delivered. ....."

2. Ruthnaswamy, British Administrative System in India, p.594 as quoted by K.R.R. Shastri in his book Indian States, p.18
   Chopra, Op.cit. pp.7-8

3. Lee Warner, Op.cit. pp.43-44

princes so isolated as to render any combination among them impossible. The princes were to be so weakened that they may not become a danger to the British power but might also become dependent upon it for their own defence. British Residents assumed the powers of dictators and interfered in all the private affairs of the princes.[1]

Regarding the Rajputana States, efforts had been made at the time of Lord Wellesley to bring them within the sphere of British influence and alliance but without any tangible results.[2] These efforts had even been negatived by Lord Cornwallis and Barlow, especially in the case of Jaipur.[3] The agreement with Jodhpur entered into by Lord Lake in 1803 never came into force.[4] Thus barring Alwar, Bharatpur and Dholpur, almost the entire area of Rajasthan remained uncontrolled when Lord Hastings took over the reins of office and it was he who established British paramountcy in Rajasthan.[5] The Rajputana States formed a distinct group by themselves and though they differed from each other in historical tradition, social conditions and political institutions, and their interests

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1. K.N. Chopra, Op.cit. pp. 7-12
   K.R.R. Shastri; Indian States pp. 17-20
2. Dr. M.S. Mehta; Lord Hastings and the Indian States, p.126
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. The treaty with Jodhpur was concluded in 1803 and ratified by the Governor-General in January, 1804.
   Aitchison; A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads, Vol. III, pp.126-27
   Lee Warner, Op.cit. p.56
5. Mehta, Op.cit. p.126
   Lee Warner, Op.cit. pp.51-52
   For treaties Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp.341-44 and 389-91 in case of Bharatpur, for Dholpur Vol. III, pp.416-30 and 351-56.
6. Mehta, Op.cit. p.126

were different from those of the Marathas. Rajasthan was in reality the field of prey for the Marathas and the Pindaris - the rivals of British power in India at the time.[1] Lord Hastings, therefore, tried to befriend the Rajputana States and embrace them as the friends of the British Government with a view to checking the growth of Scindia's power and putting an end to the machinations of Amir Khan. That was why the Rajputana States had to be given a special treatment.[2]

Maharaja Surat Singh, the sixteenth ruler, had succeeded to his hereditary principality of Bikaner on the 12th October, 1787 by having Maharaja Pratap Singh, the son of Maharaja Raj Singh, removed from his way.[3] According to Tod, Maharaja Surat Singh had, while Regent to Maharaja Pratap Singh, given away much of the Khalsa lands in jagir to the feudal chiefs so as to secure their goodwill and sympathy[4] and thus reduced the income of the State exchequer. Yet most of the jagirdars were contemplating the raising of arms against him. On rebellion breaking out at many places his very first act was to raid the Thikana of Churu in 1790 and bring it under subjugation.[5]

In 1791 he established alliance with Bijai Singh of Jodhpur and in 1798 with Pratap Singh of Jaipur. The boundary disputes with Jaipur were also settled as a result of the negotiations of Vyas Hari Shankar who was sent to Jaipur by Surat Singh for the purpose.[6]

In 1799 the Bhattis again started trouble. A strong force under Rawat Bahadur Singh of Rawatsar, Thakur Madan Singh of Bhukarka and Thakur Padam Singh of Jetpura, and others was sent to subdue them. Zabta Khan with a force of seven thousand took

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1. Mehta, Op.cit. p.127
2. Lord Hastings' Minute of December 1, 1815, para 84;
   Mehta, Op.cit. p. 127
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 95
   Powlett in his Gazetteer of the Bikaner State (p.73) mentions the date of succession to the gaddi as Asoj Sudi 12, while Dayal Das puts it as Aswin (Asoj) Sudi 10, corresponding to 21st October.
4. Tod, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.1138
5. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 95
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 73
6. Ibid.

the field against the State forces but the Bhattis were ultimately defeated, Dabli conquered and a fort called Fatehgarh constructed at Bigor.[1]

Unmindful of the alarming conditions at home Surat Singh went to the aid of Maharaja Pratap Singh of Jaipur when a military adventurer, George Thomas, raided Jaipur for the recovery of Chowth on behalf of the Marathas and thus incurred his wrath as he had to retire from the field.[2] After a respite Thomas prepared to attack Bikaner with a large army. He carried a large quantity of water loaded on camels and took Jetpur.[3] Surat Singh, however, purchased peace by offering him two lakhs of rupees. A part of this sum was paid in cash and for the balance he was given drafts on Bikaner commercial houses in Jaipur.[4] These drafts were, however, not honoured and Thomas advanced again against Bikaner[5] when Surat Singh was engaged in reducing the Bhattis. Thomas easily took Fatehabad which he razed to the ground. The speed with which Thomas was advancing threatened the security of the State of Bikaner.[6] Luckily, in response to negotiations started earlier, a contingent of Sikh cavalary, one thousand strong, arrived from Patiala.

1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 95
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.73
2. William Franklin, Military Memoirs of Mr. George Thomas, pp. 151-77
   Compton, European Military Adventurers of Hindustan, pp.145-56
   George Thomas is known in Rajasthan by the name of "Jajh Firangi".
3. Franklin, Op.cit. pp.177-79
   Compton, Op.cit. pp.156-57
   William Franklin adds that Surat Singh had inherited at the time of his accession a treasury full of gold but he wasted the entire wealth over useless projects which ultimately forced him to raise funds through tyrannical means. Dayal Das has not made any mention with regard to this invasion of George Thomas.
4. Compton, Op.cit. p.157
5. Dayal Das mentions in his Khyat (Vol. II, fol. 95) that the Bhattis persuaded George Thomas to invade Bikaner territories immediately after the construction of Fatehgarh. Thomas conquered Fatehgarh with the help of Bhattis and the Thakurs of Balash and Mangloona. He restored Fatehgarh to the Bhattis.
6. William Franklin, in the Military Memoirs of Mr. George Thomas mentions that Surat Singh had also procured the service of certain European officers who used to reside in the Bikaner

This changed the course of the war. George Thomas beat a hasty retreat and retired to Jhajjar.[1]

During Thomas' raid on Bikaner, the fort of Fatehgarh had again passed into the hands of the Bhattis. This was recaptured in 1800-01 and in January 1801, Thanas (police posts) were established at Tibi, Bhairajkan and Abhor.[2]

Soon after Surat Singh sent his forces to the assistance of Khudabux of Bhawalpur in which after heavy fighting the forts of Ballar, Phulra, Mirgarh, Maroth and Maujgarh were captured. Maujgarh was handed over to Khudabux and then the armies marched upon Bhawalpur but peace was sued for by Pir Jani Bhawalkhan and on his agreeing to leave half the territories to Khudabux, Surat Singh's forces returned to Bikaner.[3]

In 1802, Surat Singh sent an expedition against Khangarh with a view to getting hold of the reputed fabulous wealth there but though he succeeded in capturing the fort, he did not get the wealth for which the expedition was made.[4]

In 1803 a force had again to be sent against the Thakur of Churu who surrendered and paid Rs.21000/- as peshkash.[5] In 1804 a force had also to be sent against the Bhattis who had continued to cause frequent trouble. The Bhattis finally surrendered.[6]

Maharaja Surat Singh also supported the cause of Dhonkal Singh, pretender to the Jodhpur gaddi and this venture cost him almost five years' revenue of the State, as a result of which he had to have recourse to heavy extortions from the people thereby

1. Franklin, Op.cit. pp.223-39
   Compton, Op.cit. pp.168-69
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 95-96
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.74
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 96
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 74
4. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 96-97
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp. 74-75
5. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 96
6. Ibid.
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.75

causing more bad feelings between himself and his feudal chiefs and subjects.[1]

It was under such conditions of stress and strain, lawlessness in the country and increasing difficulties all around, that Maharaja Surat Singh looked towards the British for a treaty alliance.[2] An opportunity came his way when Elphinstone visited Bikaner in 1808 while on his way to Kabul. Maharaja Surat Singh welcomed him and offered him the keys of the fort of Bikaner as a token of allegiance to the British. Since, however, Elphinstone had come on a different mission, he did not accept the keys. He also did not make any commitments because the British policy then was to withdraw from all connections with the chiefs whose territories lay to the west of the Jumna.[3]

Meanwhile, the conditions in Bikaner continued to deteriorate. The principality, at the time, was seething with rebellions. Churu had to be besieged thrice.[4] Bhukarka and Sidhmukh had also to be subjugated.[5] The frequent revolts of

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1. Malleson, A Historical Sketch of the Native States of India, p. 115
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 97-98
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.508
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.75
   The Khyat of Jodhpur mentions that Sawai Singh of Pokaran who supported the candidature of Dhonkal Singh, had received assistance from Maharaja Surat Singh through Thakur Sadul Singh. There is no mention with regard to the handing over of Phalodi to the Bikaner Darbar. Similarly, the Khyat does not have any mention about a similar request received from Maharaja Man Singh of Jodhpur. The Khyat of Jodhpur also relates that Jagat Singh had very little faith in Sawai Singh's enthusiasm, that is why while Sawai Singh fought against the Jodhpur troops, Jagat Singh and Surat Singh remained stationed at Maroth. Both of them joined him after Sawai Singh won a victory over Gingoli.
2. Erskine, Gazetteer of Rajputana, Vol. III, pp.312 and 324.
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 101
   Powlett, in his Gazetteer of the Bikaner State (p.76) has also referred to Elphinstone's visit to Bikaner while on his way to Kabul.
3. Ibid.
4. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 96
5. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 101
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp.76-77

the Jagirdars and the never ending raids of the Raths and Bhattis had brought the country on the verge of anarchy.[1] Maharaja Surat Singh therefore tried again to enter into a treaty with the British and sent Kashinath Ojha to negotiate on his behalf in 1817.[2] The treaty was accordingly executed and signed and sealed on the 9th March, 1818 between C.T. Metcalfe on behalf of the English East India Company and Kashinath Ojha on behalf of Maharaja Surat Singh.[3] It was ratified by Lord Hastings at Patarsa Ghat on the 21st March, 1818.[4] Thus for the first time relationship was established between the Bikaner State and the British.

Before making a study of the Treaty it would perhaps be appropriate to narrate in brief the circumstances which made the British to acquiese so readily to the request for an alliance. As a result of the policy of non-intervention introduced by Lord Cornwallis, not only the States of Central India and Rajputana became a prey to the activities of the Pindaris and other freebooters but the Pindaris had become stronger with the decline of the Maratha power and they sometimes went even so far as to raid the British territories. It was, therefore, felt that no line of defence or disposition of troops could protect the British territories and so the British desired to establish a barrier against the plundering activities of the Pindaris. This was further facilitated by the signing of Treaty in 1817 with the Scindia which, by removing the previously imposed restrictions, enabled the British to form

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 96
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp.75-78
   Tod, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.1142
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 107
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.509
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 78
3. Ibid.
4. Aitchison; Op.cit. Vol. II, pp.288-90
   Princep; Narrative of Political and Military Transactions, p.437
   Malleson; Op.cit. p. 115
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 107-08
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.78

new alliances with the princes of Rajasthan. It is because of this that we find that at this time the British were interested only in subordinating the external relations of the princes to the control of the British power and not in acquiring any power of interference in the internal administration of the States.[1]

A critical analysis of the Treaty signed between the English East India Company and Maharaja Surat Singh shows that there was to be perpetual friendship, alliance and unity of interests between the Company and Maharaja Surat Singh and his heirs and successors and the friends and enemies of the one party were to be the friends and enemies of the other party.[2] The British government engaged to protect the principality and territory of Bikaner.[3] Maharaja Surat Singh and his heirs and successors were to act in subordinate cooperation with the British Government and acknowledge its supremacy and were not to have any other connections with any other chief or State.[4] The Maharaja and his heirs and successors were not to enter into negotiations with any chief or State without the knowledge and sanction of the British Government; but the usual amicable correspondence with friends and relations was to continue.[5] The ruler of Bikaner was not to commit aggression on any one; if by accident any dispute were to arise with any one, it was

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1. Lord Hastings' Minute of December 1, 1815, para 84.
   Mehta, Op.cit. p.127
   Lord Hastings recorded in his minute of December 1, 1815 that "the establishment of our influence over those (Rajput States) would interpose strong barriers between the Sikhs and those powers which might be expected to aid them." According to Dr. Mohan Sinha Mehta, Lord Hastings saw in the alliance with the Rajput States not only a check to the extension of the power of Scindia, Holkar and Amir Khan, an object of considerable value in his estimation, but the acquisition of immense strategic advantages for the company's military and political position in central India.
2. Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, p.288, Article I.
3. Ibid, Article II
4. Ibid, Article III.
5. Ibid. Article IV.

to be submitted for settlement to the arbitration and award of the British Government.[1]

The Maharaja agreed to restore the property plundered by certain persons of the principality of Bikaner by way of highway robbery from the residents of the British territories till then. He further agreed to entirely suppress robbers and plunderers in his principality.[2] The British agreed to afford on his application such assistance as was required by the Maharaja for the suppression of robbers and plunderers. The Maharaja had, however, to pay the expenses of the forces employed on his behalf. If he was not in a position to pay the expenses he was to cede parts of his territories to the British Government which after the payment of those expenses were to be restored.[3] The British Government also agreed to reduce to subjection the Thakurs and other inhabitants of Bikaner who might revolt and throw off the authority of the Maharaja. This assistance was to be given when applied for by the Maharaja on condition that the Maharaja agreed to pay all the expenses of the forces to be employed. The Maharaja was to furnish troops at the requisition of the British Government according to his means.[4] The Maharaja and his heirs and successors were to be absolute rulers of their country and the British jurisdiction was not to be introduced into Bikaner. The Maharaja further agreed to render the roads of Bikaner and Bhatner passable and safe for the transit of caravans to and from the countries of Kabul and Khurasan. This was to be done with a view to enable the merchants to pass in safety.[5] The Maharaja was not to increase the custom duties to be collected from the traders passing through his principality.[6]

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1. Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, p.288, Article V.
2. Ibid, pp.288-89, article 6VI
3. Ibid, p.289, article VII.
4. Ibid, article VIII
5. Ibid, article IX,
6. Ibid.

Thus the subsidiary alliance formed by the British Government with the ruler of Bikaner, bound Maharaja Surat Singh to subordinate cooperation and, in return, the British Government engaged to protect his territories and to reduce his rebellious nobles and subjects to obedience. This Treaty differed from the treaties signed with other States of Rajputana save that of Jaisalmer in one particular respect only. The rulers of Bikaner were not required to pay any tribute to the British because they were not paying any such tribute to the Marathas. Thus, although the Maharaja had been assigned a position of subordinate cooperation, the State of Bikaner had not been made a tributary State. It is clear that the relationship of the British with the ruler of Bikaner was based upon perpetual friendship, alliance, unity of interests. The Treaty, however, did bind the ruler of Bikaner to subordinate cooperation and recognized the supremacy of the British Government, but otherwise the rulers of Bikaner were to remain absolute rulers of their State and British jurisdiction was not to be introduced into this principality. The suppression of brigandage, the restoration of the property within his territories, the obligation of rendering military aid on requisition according to his means and of paying for such assistance as he might require of the British, were the terms of Maharaja Surat Singh's acceptance of the alliance.

The Treaty contained special stipulations. By article 6, the Maharaja undertook to suppress all robbers and plunderers in his territory and to restore the property plundered by his subjects from the British territories down to the time of the conclusion of the Treaty. By article 7, the British Government engaged to restore the Maharaja's authority over his rebellious vassals and subjects provided he paid the expenses incurred by the British Government for this purpose. But the supreme Government later made very interesting observations on this article of the Treaty, namely, that these articles referred to

temporary circumstances prevailing at the time of the signing of the Treaty and that military aid was not to be given to the Indian States for suppression of internal disturbances, except under the express authority of the Government.[1]

The relationship of the House of Bikaner with the British as the Central Power in India starts from the signing of the Treaty of 1818. Though the relations between Maharaja Surat Singh and the Central Power during his reign remained generally cordial, a gradual change was taking place in the British policy towards the Indian States, and Bikaner could not remain an exception. The various incidents referred to hereunder would indicate that the emphasis in the policy was more on subordinate cooperation than on perpetual friendship and alliance. And in the subsequent period of Surat Singh's successors, the provisions of the Treaty began to be interpreted to suit the interests of the Central Power.

Immediately after the signing of the Treaty, several sardars of Bikaner, who had been restive for a long time, disturbed the peace. The Maharaja sent Mehta Abir Chand to Delhi to ask the British for help in accordance with article 7 of the Treaty, and General Alner came at the head of a strong army. It occupied Fatehabad and Hissar and marched upon Sidhmukh Jassana and Birkali and took these forts after overcoming stiff resistance from the defenders. Churu was taken after a month's siege. Later Sulkhania and Nimba were occupied by the British force and Jet Singh Bidawat was ousted from Sujangarh. The fort of Bhadra which the Sikhs had retained, was taken possession of and later handed over to the Maharaja; but the pargana of Bhadra was retained by the British for four years by which time the expenses of the British force amounting to Rs.75,525/- were realised from its revenue. The British force took twelve forts

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1. Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, p.278
   Malleson, Op.cit. p.116

during this expedition and all of them were made over to the Maharaja[1].

The British Government had bestowed on old soldiers a number of villages of Tibi which Maharaja Surat Singh claimed as being part of Bhatner in Bikaner.[2] In 1828 Edward Trevelyan was sent to settle the Bikaner claim to the Tibi villages and to forty villages adjoining Bhadra, which is called the Beniwal pargana as belonging chiefly to Beniwal jats. Kalyanmal had once ruled over this area and had established his second capital at Sirsa when Maldeo had thrown him out of Bikaner. For a very long time this tract of land was being administered by the Kiledars of Bhatner.[3] Since Maharaja Surat Singh had conquered Bhatner in 1805, he claimed the territories which had once formed part of Bhatner.[4] The decision in both the cases was unfavourable to Bikaner.[5] Later, a major part of this land was bestowed on Bikaner in recognition of her services during the Mutiny of 1857.[6]

In 1824, Suraj Mal Bika, the Thakur of Dadrewa and Sampat Singh of Saledi established themselves at Bahal within British territory.[7] But their lawless activities necessitated their expulsion from there. Pursued by a British force, these Thakurs

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 108-09
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p. 509. He however, mentions only ten forts having been taken with the help of the British.
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp. 78-79
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 112
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.79
   Sir Edward Colebrooke, Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana, refers to this claim in his Kharita dated 12th March, 1828 addressed to Maharaja Surat Singh and rejects the claim regarding the villages in the Beniwal parganabut accepts claim to some pasteur lands to the north of Bhadra and adds that the same may be taken over from the Pathans with whom they then were.
   At one stage claim was also made for the villages of Sirsa and Fatehabad, but it was subsequently waived.
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 112.
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.79
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
   Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp.290-91, Sanad No. 11, dated 11th April, 1861.
7. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 112.
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.79

entered the Bikaner territory where their chase was taken up by the Bikaner forces. They were ferretted out from fort to fort but the Bikaner army destroyed each one of these eight fortified hide-outs and rendered these outlaws helpless.[1]

Cordial relations with the Central Power continued to be maintained, and when, in 1827, Lord Amherst held a Darbar at Meerut, Mehta Abir Chand represented the Bikaner Darbar and presented a costly nazar consisting of precious articles.[2] The Governor-General also sent a Khilat (robe of honour) to Maharaja Surat Singh.[3]

The various Kharitas which the Maharaja of Bikaner received from the British political authorities during the period immediately succeeding the signing of the Treaty, clearly show the influence of the policy of subordinate cooperation. On the 16th November 1820 Maj. Gen. Sir David Ochterlony asked Maharaja Surat Singh to help Capt. Colvin who was proceeding to inspect the Chitrang canal.[4] Again Henry Middleton asked the Maharaja to help Johari Mal who had deserted Ramgarh and came to settle down in Churu.[5] When the Kiledar of Bhatner sowed wheat in uncultivated area, the British objected and insisted upon the payment of a sum of Rs.7700/-.[6] On July 12, 1823 Sir Charles Elliot asked the Maharaja to arrestone Gulab Dass, Gumashta of Seth Hamirmal and Suratram of Ajmer for having collected a huge sum by issuing Hundis.[7]

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 112.
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 79
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 113
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.79
3. Ibid.
4. Maj. Gen. Sir Ochterlony's Kharita dated 16.11.1820 (in the author's possession).
5. Henry Middleton's Kharita dated nil (in my possession)
6. A. Ross's Kharita dated 31.10.1822 (in my possession)
7. Sir Charles Elliot's Kharita dated 12.7.1823 (in the author's possession).

On 27th October, 1823 the British asked the Maharaja to investigate into the dacoity committed by Bhati Jalim Singh.[1] In 1824 Sir Charles Elliot asked the Maharaja to send Rs.16,400/- with interest for the money which he had borrowed from one Harnarain of Delhi treasury.[2] Again on 3rd November 1824, Sir Charles Elliot asked the Maharaja to arrest a dacoit, Surja, who had attacked the town of Bahal,encountered the police and took shelter in Loharu.[3] On January 15, 1825 infantry troops with four guns were sent by the British to arrest Surja and the Maharaja had to meet the expenses incurred for the troops sent to Bikaner though the Maharaja never asked for this military assistance.[4] In 1825 when the people of Bikaner territory had taken pe illegal possession of houses in the Patiala territory the British asked the Maharaja to make amends for the wrong done.[5] When four camels were stolen from Tilauri village in Hissar, the Maharaja was asked by Sir Charles Elliot in September, 1825 to arrest the offenders and send them to the District Magistrate.[6]

All these activities go to reveal that keeping apart the terms and articles of the Treaty of perpetual friendship, alliance and unity of interests, it was always the intention of British in India to see that the rulers of the States were reduced to a subordinate position.

During the reign of Maharaja Ratan Singh who succeeded Maharaja Surat Singh in April, 1828[7] as the eighteenth ruler of Bikaner, the relations of the British with the Bikaner ruler

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1. Sir Charles Elliot's Kharita dated 27.10.1823 (in my possession).
2. Sir Charles Elliot's Kharita dated 24.3.1824(in my possession)
3. Sir Charles Elliot's Kharita dated 3.11.1824(in my possession)
4. Sir Charles Elliot's Kharita dated 15.1.1825(in my possession)
5. Sir Charles Elliot's Kharita dated 17.1.1825(in my possession)
6. Sir Charles Elliot's Kharita dated 21.9.1825(in my possession)
7. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 80
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 114

left no doubt with regard to the shifting of emphasis from the status of allies to that of subordinate cooperation. The Governor-General's congratulatory message (Kharita) was received in Bikaner in May[1] and with it arrived a communication from the British Resident in Delhi informing the Maharaja that Dhonkal Singh was deporting himself in a very objectionable manner in Jodhpur and that Bikaner should steer clear of any relations with him. The Maharaja at once cautioned his sardars to prevent Dhonkal Singh from transgressing into Bikaner territory.[2]

Soon after the Maharaja's accession, some Bhatis of Jaisalmer carried off a number of camels belonging to Bikaner Government. Shah Manik Chand, a Bikaner official, asked the Jaisalmer officials to get the camels restored to him, but the latter paid no heed to it. This necessitated military action. Troops of Bikaner as well as of Jaisalmer moved against each other. Upon entering the Jaisalmer boundary the Bikaner troops started plundering but when collision took place with the Jaisalmer troops, the Bikaner forces reeled and nearly lost a Nagara but for the bravery of a Sikh soldier who saved it at the cost of his own life.

As this action of Bikaner contravened the provision of the fifth article of the Treaty of 1818, the British authorities did not approve of it. But later they asked Jawan Singh, Maharana of Udaipur, to mediate between the two parties. The differences between Bikaner and Jaisalmer were settled on making the parties agree to pay reparations to each other. This decision received the approval of the British.[3]

A meeting between the rulers of Bikaner and Jaisalmer was

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1. Governor-General's Kharita dated 16.5.1828(in my possession)
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 114
3. Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp.277-78

arranged by Trevelyan in 1835.[1] Lt. Boileau, who was present at this occasion, gives a vivid account of this meeting in his "Personal Narrative of a tour through the Western States of Rajwara." At this meeting the two parties signed a treaty of friendship, each undertaking not to invade the other's territory, and not to shelter each other's rebels and each undertook to come to the defence of the other if either of them was threatened by an enemy invasion.[2]

This contravention of article 5 of the Treaty being tolerated by the British at the time has a significance which needs explanation. At a time when the policy of non-interference was being substituted by that of active intervention, some of the British officers did not like the policy of treating the Indian princes with discourtesy and interfering too much in their internal affairs. Elphinstone and Malcolm had both given expression to their opinion which was explicitly against the policy of too much interference. According to Thompson, the British policy of interference, despite the protection it gave to the Indian princes, brought to them "depression down to a condition of insignificance."[3] Munro in his memorandum dated 12th August, 1817 wrote to Lord Hastings, "The strength of the British Government enables it to put down every rebellion, to repel every foreign invasion and to give its subjects a degree of protection which those of no native powers enjoy. Its laws and institutions also afford them a security from domestic operation, unknown in those States; but these advantages are dearly bought. They are purchased by the sacrifice of independence of national character, and of whatever renders a people respectable."[4]

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1. Maj. Alve's Kharita dated 24.1.1835 (in my possession) informing that Mr. Henry Trevelyan is coming to Bikaner and would use his good offices for settlement of dispute.
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 116
3. Thompson, Op.cit. p.272
4. Sir Thomas Munro's memorandum dated 12.8.1817 to Lord Hardinge quoted by Edward Thompson in "The Making of the Indian Princes p.273.

Taking these views into consideration, it becomes clear that this violation of article five of the Treaty was overlooked not because of any basic change in the British policy but only because of a desire on the part of the British officers to avoid creating unpleasantness and embittering relations keeping in view their primary objective, namely, that of checking the predatory system of the Pindaris and the growth of Maratha influence.

Maharaja Ratan Singh had to approach the British against the Khan of Bhawalpur who had occupied Phulra, Ballar, Maroth and Maujgarh and was intending to usurp other areas as well.[1] The British reply sent by Sir Edward Colebrooke in his Kharita dated 16th April, 1829 did not recognize the claims of the Maharaja on the ground that the Treaty did not cover such issues and as such the areas which had already been taken possession of, were allowed to remain in Sindh.[2] The Maharaja was further asked not to interfere in the Sindh area.[3]

The British sought the cooperation of Maharaja Ratan Singh for suppressing the lawless bandits, who with the assistance of certain disgruntled sardars of Bikaner, Jodhpur and Jaipur, had virtually set up a lawless government in the area adjoining the triple border in the close vicinity of Shekhawati.[4] Mr. George Clerk was deputed in 1829 to find out ways and means for restoring order in the area in consultation with the rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner. On this occasion Maharaja Ratan Singh deputed Mehta Hindumal and Shah Hukam Chand to wait upon Mr. Clerk and cooperate with him in suppressing the dacoits. As a result of these mutual discussions it had been decided that the three rulers should demolish the hide-outs and fortifications of these dacoits in their respective areas and set up police stations.[4]

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 116
2. Ibid.
   Sir Edward Colebrooke's Kharita dated 16.4.1829(in my possession)
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 116
4. Ibid.
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.80

This was a period of widespread lawlessness and some of these plunderers had become so powerful that they had endangered public peace; and fought pitched engagements against the British. They ravaged British territories, surprised the Pay Officer at Nasirabad, cut down the guard and carried away the money of Government. Hari Singh, leader of a party of Kazzaks beat the cavalry many a time and the robber chiefs of Gudha could collect a force of as many as three thousand strong. It was with very great difficulty that Anderson and Forster, the British officers could, with the assistance of the troops of the Jaisalmer and Bikaner chiefs, restore order.[1] Surana Hukamchand was appointed on behalf of the Government of Bikaner to suppress the dacoits. He worked very hard and arrested the Bidawat chief of the Lodhsar village, demolished his fortress and set up a police station in the area. He also demolished the hide-outs at Meegna, Bambhni, Devni, Chari, Sela and others, and set up police stations in these areas.[2]

Thakur Berisal of Mahajan was at the time giving shelter to a large number of dacoits and with their aid was conducting plundering raids in the Bikaner area. Maharaja Ratan Singh's warnings being ineffective, he despatched his Diwan, Surana Hukamchand with an army to subjugate him. The Thakur fled to Tibi. The fort of Mahajan was surrendered only after a siege of three days. Ultimately, however, Berisal surrendered unconditionally and he was restored his jagir after collecting Rs.60,000/- as peshkash and a word of honour that he would not bring to harm any of his men who had surrendered the fort. Berisal, however, did not keep his word and on his return to Mahajan, got the Amravats and others killed and then he fled to Phulra.[3] Another siege had, therefore, to be planned and

1. Prof.N.R.Khadgawat, Rajasthan's Role in the Struggle of 1857, pp. 6-7
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 116
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 116-17
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.510
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp. 80-81

Mahajan put under the direct control of the Maharaja. The Thakur, however, escaped to Bhawalpur. On the Maharaja's apprising the Resident at Delhi about the same, the Resident asked the Bhawalpur authorities to turn out the Thakur but he had meanwhile proceeded to Jaisalmer where he gained the support of Rao Ram Singh of Pugal and Rawal Gaj Singh of Jaisalmer and began to amass troops. The Bikaner troops sent under Diwan Laxmi Chand Surana and Mehta Mohan Lal to subdue them met with little success and the Pugal troops created utter disorder. Certain other jagirdars, such as, Banirot Jorawar Singh, Ladkhanis and Chandawats, also rose in arms at the same time and began their plundering activities with the assistance of Rajputs from Jaipur and Jodhpur. Thereupon the Maharaja again approached the Resident who informed him that the Political Agents at Ajmer, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer had been apprised of the situation and necessary arrangements were being made and that if these arrangements failed, troops would be sent from Nasirabad to curb the activities of these plunderers.[1]

Taking advantage of the prevailing lawlessness, the Baoris under Pema and Jora also made a common cause with the plunderers and went about plundering villages. The Bikaner troops under Harnath Singh and Surana Lal Chand were sent out to subdue them, but having failed to put an end to these plundering activities completely, Maharaja Ratan Singh marched in person with his troops against these Jagirdars and disaffected people, and while at Kelan he received a Kharita from the Resident informing him that the British troops were leaving from Nasirabad. The Maharaja made immediate arrangements for them and he himself marched against Berisal. The rebels were defeated and when they sought shelter in the fort, the Maharaja besieged

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 117
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.510
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 81
   Mr. Hawkin's(Agent to the Governor-General) Kharita dated 30.9.1830 (in my possession).

it and forced them to surrender. On his arrival in Bikaner in 1830, the Maharaja wrote to the Resident at Delhi that there was now no necessity for him to send troops from Nasirabad.[1]

The lawlessness which prevailed in the Bikaner area at the time clearly shows that Maharaja Ratan Singh was practically helpless and the British were to come to his aid; but the Resident's action of sending troops from Nasirabad was not approved by the supreme Government. The Resident was accused of having acted under misapprehension of the tenure of articles 6 and 7 of the Treaty of 1818 regarding the claim of the Maharaja upon the British Government for assistance. These articles were interpreted to refer to temporary circumstances prevailing at the time of the signing of the Treaty and gave the ruler of Bikaner no right to call on the British Government for assistance against his disaffected subjects at any future period. The British Government was of the opinion that the case was not one in which they were called upon to interfere, and reminded the Resident that military aid was not to be given to any prince for suppression of internal disturbance except under the specific authority of the Government.[2]

This policy of the British marked a significant change in their attitude towards the Bikaner Darbar. Maharaja Surat Singh had entered into the treaty of alliance with the British primarily with a view to seeking assistance against the plundering activities of his lawless Thakurs, and that was in fact the chief advantage which had induced him to enter into the alliance. The British having secured isolation and subordinate cooperation of the Bikaner Darbar betrayed the trust reposed in them and left the Darbar in the lurch at a moment

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 117-18
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p.510
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 81
2. Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, p.278

when he needed their assistance most.

When Maharaja Ratan Singh complained to the British against Thakur Pratap Singh of Bhadra who had come to Pugal from British territories tried to scale walls of the fort and fled away after losing five of his men in the engagement, they took a very light view of the case; and the Resident only gave an assurance that proper arrangements were being made. The result of the British indifference was that within two months of this incident, the activities of these rebels were on the increase, and Surana Laxmi Chand and Khawas Gulab Singh had to be despatched against them. It was at this time that Col. Locket was sent from Delhi to restore peace and tranquility in Shekhawati by suppressing the rebel Sardars. The Maharaja asked both these officers to wait upon Col. Locket and offer their whole-hearted cooperation.[1]

In 1831, Maharaja Ratan Singh received quite a large number of Kharitas, asking him to punish the rebels and restore peace in the area. Sir Edward Colebrooke, Resident at Delhi complained against the jagirdars of Barsalpur who had attacked Jodhpur territory and taken away cattle and goods.[2] Mr. W.B. Martin informed the Maharaja on 24th March 1831 that ten cart loads of gur worth Rs.1425/- together with bullocks had been plundered and certain men murdered in Bikaner territory.[3] The Maharaja was asked either to deliver the goods or to pay the price and see that such things did not happen in future. Mr. Martin again wrote on 28th March, 1831 asking the Maharaja to punish the insurgents (Pratap Singh and Lachhman Singh).[4] On April 1, 1831, Martin again referred to large scale plundering being carried on the Bikaner-Jaipur boundary and informed the

1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 118
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.81
   Mr. W.B.Martin's Kharita dated 17.12.1830(in my possession)
2. Sir Edward Colebrooke's (Resident Delhi) Kharita undated (in my possession)
3. Mr. W.B.Martin's Kharita dated 24.3.1831(in my possession)
4. Ibid dated 28.3.1831

Maharaja that the Jaipur ruler had also been requested to keep a check on these activities in his territory.[1] Martin's Kharita dated 7th April, 1831, reveals that some persons from Bikaner territory looted Shekhawati and committed murder.[2] The culprits were to be punished and the plundered property restored or its price was to be paid to those who suffered. Martin's Kharita of April 18, 1831 refers to grains and ghee being looted in Bikaner territory.[3] Again the Maharaja was informed by Martin on April 18, 1831 that the Governor-General had deputed Col. Abraham Locket to conduct an inquiry into the plundering raids. Martin's Kharita of April 27, 1831 refers to the arrest of eighteen dacoits with plundered property at Lodhsar.[4] Similarly, on May 21,1831, the Maharaja was asked to surrender the criminals who had been arrested by him in Bikaner territory.[5] Martin's Kharita of 25th May, 1831 issued a specific directive to the Maharaja asking him to send experienced persons because Shekhawats of Bisau and Sikar were conducting plundering raids in Bikaner territory as a result of which certain villages had been depopulated and a number of men and women carried away.[6] There is no dearth of Kharitas from Mr. Martin relating to the plundering activities of the rebel chiefs.

A critical analysis of all these Kharitas received by the Maharaja in 1831 goes to establish that the turbulent chiefs had been up in arms against the established authority and the entire area remained more or less virtually in a state of terror. The suppression of these lawless bandits and refractory chiefs had become a serious problem both to the ruling princes

1. Mr. W.B. Martin's Kharita dated 1.4.1831
2. Ibid, dated 7.4.1831
3. Ibid, dated 18.4.1831
4. Ibid, dated 18.4.1831, 27.4.1831, and 28.4.1831.
5. Ibid, dated 21.5.1831
6. Ibid, dated 25.5.1831

of Rajputana and the British Government. All these refractory chiefs had taken advantage of the condition of general insecurity which so often happens during a period of transition.[1] So serious had the situation become that the Shekhawati Brigade had to besiege the forts of these bandit chiefs several times and peace could be restored with very great difficulty.[2] The rebels had become extremely powerful and, it seems as if the general public too, either out of fear or out of sympathy, cooperated with them.[3] Some of these bandits had become almost legendary figures and attracted so much of popular attention as to be regarded invincible.[4] Popular bandits like Doongji and Jawaharji who had been declared outlaws by the British, could secure protection even at the hands of responsible citizens. A large band of Shekhawats journeyed upto Agra after Doongji had been arrested, for the express purpose of effecting Doongji's escape from Jail and the bandit Doongji was again at his freebooting trade. Such incidents would not have happened if the journey of these hostile elements had been impeded, but many chiefs even then, some through fear and some through sympathy, never obstructed these robbers.[5]

In 1834, Col. Alves, the Agent to the Governor-General, requested the Maharaja to meet him, and the meeting took place at Ratangarh where ways and means for establishing tranquility in the border regions were decided upon. It was decided that the Barotias should be pardoned; that a Shekhawati brigade should be raised and stationed at Jhunjnu and the Maharaja should contribute Rs.22,000/- annually towards its maintenance. This brigade was to include a troop of a hundred Bidawats. Sangram Singh of Charwas was appointed Risaldar of this troop and Auji of Bhojolai, Jemandar.[6]

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1. Khadgawat, Op.cit. pp. 7-8
2. Ibid, p. 6
3. Ibid, p. 8
4. Ibid, p. 8
5. Ibid p. 10
6. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 82

During this meeting, the Maharaja also drew the attention of Col. Alves to the injustice of the British Government's action in having taken over possession of forty villages belonging to Bikaner. The Colonel having promised to move the Government to redress this, the Maharaja left for Bikaner. En route, he exacted fines from rebellious jagirdars.[1] Lawlessness was rampant in the area and the activities of these disgruntled chiefs and bandits increased to such an extent that they even came upto Mehsar, Gharsisar and Lunkaransar.[2] Shekhawat Doongar Singh extended his activities to the Sikar area and captured many camels and horses belonging to the British troops.[3] On being approached by the British, the Maharaja placed the services of Thakur of Lodhsar at their disposal who gave a clue regarding the hide-outs of Doongar Singh. A Kharita dated the 27th March, 1835 was received from the British, thanking the Maharaja profusely for his assistance.[4]

Maharaja Ratan Singh continued to receive Kharitas from the British for military assistance. Major Forster requested the Maharaja on 25th September, 1837 to send Shah Hukam Chand at the earliest so that arrangements could be made after personal discussions.[5] Again on 26th January, 1838 he requested the Maharaja to send Risaldar Sheikh Rahimula with troops.[6] Forster's Kharita of 13th February, 1838 asked for the handing over of certain bandits, to the British.[7] In May, he informed the Maharaja that the British army was fully prepared to take action.[8] Again on the 10th dark half of the Kartika, Forster expressed gratitude for sending troops to curb dacoits in Marwar.[9]

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1. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 82 ; Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol.II, fols.123-24
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 122.
3. Ibid, fol. 126
4. Dungar Singh was a descendant of Padam Singh, son of Kirat Singh who was one of the sons of Rao Kishan Singh of Sikar. The descendants of Padam Singh were the fief holders of Bathot
5. Major Forster's (Military Officer Shekhawati Brigade) Kharita dated 25.9.1837
6. Ibid, dated 26.1.1838
7. Ibid, dated 13.2.1838
8. Ibid, dated 28.5.1838
9. Ibid, dated Kartik Badi 18, V.S. 1895 (A.D. 1838)

In January 1839, he again requested the Maharaja to send troops from Sujangarh to crush the dacoits of Marwar.[1] His Kharita of 10th March, 1839 mentions the arrest of Hari Singh and Jodh Singh.[2] In August 1839, we find Forster again seeking help from the Maharaja. Thus the Maharaja cooperated with the British whole-heartedly in their efforts to restore peace and tranquility in the area.

In 1836, the Maharaja performed the 'pratishtha' of his father's cenotaph at Devikund. This was followed by a pilgrimage to Gaya where he was accompanied by a British officer who remained in attendance. At Gaya the Maharaja made his followers take an oath to discard female infanticide. Those guilty of it were to be punished by confiscation of their lands and jagirs.[3]

From 1830 to 1847, the entire territory of Bikaner continued more or less, in a state of lawlessness. The troops of Bikaner cooperated whole-heartedly with the British and it was through their assistance that the famous bandit Jawahar Singh could be arrested.[4] Though the bandits had disturbed the reign of Maharaja Ratan Singh to a very great extent, he did not give up his traditional dignity. Throughout Rajasthan a Rajput chief is expected to defend the 'Sharnagat' (one seeking protection) even if he happens to be his worst enemy. Maharaja Ratan Singh refused to handover to the British, Jawahar Singh who had surrendered himself to the Maharaja and sought shelter at his feet.[5] In the history of Bikaner's relationship with the Central Powers, this gesture of magnanimity shall ever shine like a star and remind posterity that, even in that age of degeneration and decay, the torch of Rajput chivalry was kept burning by the

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1. Maj. Forster's Kharita dated 7.1.1839
2. Ibid, dated 10.3.1839
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 126-29
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 82
4. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 157-59
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 85
5. Khadgawat, Op.cit. p. 10.

House of Bikaner even at the cost of the heir-apparent's life. When pressed hard by the British to surrender Jawahar Singh to them, Maharaja Ratan Singh refused to do so and offered to hand over his son, Sardar Singh, as a hostage to the British. This example of chivalry and courage in an age of darkness is writ large on the pages of Bikaner history.

A critical analysis of all the joint operations against the lawless elements shows that the British penetration in the area heralded an era of anarchy and misrule. This was an age of transition; the old administration was crumbling to pieces; the new one was yet to come. A vacuum had been created in the body politic. The fury of the disgruntled nobility assisted by the lawless elements introduced so many complications that, for years together, the British troops had to wage incessant warfare with a view to restoring peace and tranquility.

The Maharaja's claim to a number of villages on the Sirsa border was kept alive, and as a result of his constant reminders for its settlement, Maj. Thoresby was sent in 1837 to investigate the claim. But Thoresby's findings brought no benefit to the Maharaja.[1]

In the year 1844, at the instance of the British, the route between Bhawalpur and Sirsa was improved by the Bikaner ruler ~~Darbar~~ by getting 'Sarais' built and wells sunk at convenient intervals.[2] Transit duties were reduced at the recommendation of the British. Henceforth only eight annas instead of eight rupees had to be paid for a camel-load; a cart-load was fixed at one rupee; and, buffalo, bullock, mule and pony-loads at two per cent on the value. Nothing was to be paid on unloaded

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 132-33
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 83
   Sir Alves' Kharita dated 6.1.1837(in my possession)
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 147-48.
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.84

animals. The Government was much pleased with the readiness with which the Bikaner ~~Darbar~~ ruler complied with its recommendations. Hindumal[1] also received credit for his share in the feform.[2]

In 1845, the boundary near Sujangarh was settled by Capt. Jackson, The villages under dispute were Tharde of Bikaner and Kanpur of Jodhpur. Capt. Jackson also investigated the claim of Jaisalmer and Bikaner; and for these enquiries Mr.Cunningham joined Jackson at Suratgarh. They had hardly started their investigations when the news regarding the outbreak of the first Sikh war was received.[3] The enquiry was suspended and Cunningham returned to his headquarters. The Maharaja of Bikaner was asked by the British to send armed forces, guns and other war materials to their aid. Capt. Jackson reached Hanumangarh (Bhatner) on December 24 and marched on Muktsar along with the Bikaner troops and then stationed the Bikaner contingent of horse and foot at Asabwala. This force was not required to cross the Sutlej because by this time peace between the Maharaja of Lahore (Daleep Singh son of Ranjit Singh) and the British had been concluded on the 30th March, 1846. In the battles which took place on the eastern side of the river Sutlej, however the Bikaner troops gave a commendable account of themselves.

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1. Hindumal was the second son of Mehta Mool Chand (eleventh in descent from Lakhansi who came with Bika from Jodhpur) who had fought by the side of Maharaja Surat Singh in the siege against Churu in 1813. He was appointed State Vakil at Delhi in 1827. In appreciation of his valuable services, he was appointed Prime Minister by Maharaja Ratan Singh. Hindumal was also made incharge of the mint and created Maharao by Ratan Singh. Hindumal played an important pole in subduing Jawaharji. He was also the recipient of a Tazim from Udaipur.
2. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 84
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 151-54.
   Powlett, Op.cit. pp.84-85

On the conclusion of the war, rewards were given on the recommendation of Capt. Jackson by the Maharaja to the principal officers of the force. A long list of these Thakurs is given in the Khyat. The British Government presented two fully equipped guns to Bikaner Government in recognition of its services[1] and the services of the Maharaja were highly praised in a despatch dated the 20th August, 1847 from the Secretary, Foreign Department to the Agent to the Governor-General for Rajputana.[2]

Dungar Singh and some of his party members had been taken prisoners earlier and handed over to the British who had shut them up in the Agra Jail. But in 1847, Dungar Singh's lieutenant Man Singh raided the jail and freed Dungar Singh. When the Maharaja learnt of it, he issued an order promising rewards to those who would capture these dacoits and also threatened with confiscation of land and other dire punishment to those who were found sheltering or communicating with Dungar Singh and his men. This step was taken by the Maharaja on receiving a communication on the subject from the British Government. Newspapers published the news of this incident with great prominence. In one of the Delhi papers suspicion was cast on Rao Hindumal of being in collusion with the dacoits. This upset Hindumal greatly and he hurried to Simla to clear his position before the British authorities.

Meanwhile Dungar Singh persisted in his plundering activities. He and Jawahar Singh held a number of Agarwalas to ransom and got them to pay Rs.25,000/-. The forces of Bikaner

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1. Powlett, Op.cit. pp.84-85
   Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 151-54
2. "The Governor-General has learnt with much gratification the hearty cooperation afforded to you by the Maharaja of Bikaner in placing the resources of his State at your disposal and His Excellency considers that the energy and fidelity of His Highness' troops detached under your command is deserving of high commendation." The House of Bikaner, p.172
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 159-62
   Powlett, Op.cit. p.85

which had been detailed to pursue them surrounded them while returning with the money. They, however, evaded arrest leaving their looted cash to be picked up by the Maharaja's forces. Dungar Singh and his men now extended their operations into the British cantonment at Nasirabad where they looted the treasury. Capt. Shaw was sent in pursuit of Jawahar Singh, who was known to have taken refuge in Bikaner. The Maharaja deputed Harnath Singh and Mehta Hari Singh to help Capt. Shaw. Jawahar Singh was surrounded in village Gharsisar and forced to surrender.[1]

Mukand Singh, chief of Sikar often indulged in marauding adventures. His successes encouraged him to intensify his activities and the people raised a hue and cry against it. Newspapers accused the Maharaja and the Maharajkumar of being at the back of Mukand Singh. Rao Hindumal sent letters to the British authorities to clear the charges levelled against the Maharaja and the prince by newspapers. Later when urgent communications were sent to Bikaner Government asking for serious and expeditious action to be taken to round up the Sikar and Jodhpur plunderers, the Bikaner sardars rendered valuable aid in recovering the looted property, and in apprehending the miscreants. Harnath Singh Narnot, played a distinguished part in the suppression of these bandits.[2]

In 1847, Col. Southerland, Governor-General's Agent, visited Bikaner. After Elphinstone's visit this was the second visit to Bikaner by a high ranking British official. The Maharaja made a suitable welcome to the Colonel who was treated to a round of entertainments.[3] Rao Hindumal who was suffering

1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 157-59
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 85
2. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 85
3. Col. Southerland fell down from his horse during a tent-pegging contest, but he escaped injury. The Maharaja gave a hundred rupees in alms as thanksgiving at this time.

from ill health during this visit insisted on being present at all the functions and on observing all the formalities and courtesies of the Darbar. Thus he had to walk and climb stairs which exertion made his condition worse as a result of which he died.

During the course of this visit conversation once turned on the affairs of Sindh and the Maharaja expressed his strong disapproval of the annexation of this State as being unjust.[1]

In 1848, the Sikh governor of Multan, Dewan Moolraj showed signs of rebellion. The British Government asked the Maharaja of Bikaner to set up thanas on the Multan-Bhawalpur border and to confiscate all the wealth Moolraj had kept with traders in Multan. The Maharaja made enquiries about Moolraj's investments in Multan and finding that there was none, he informed the British Government accordingly. The dissatisfied Sikhs found their leader in Moolraj and flocked to him. The British Government had, therefore, to make military preparations to meet this threat,[2] and Bikaner's aid was called for. The Maharaja was asked to supply one hundred camels for transport and flour for the army personnel.[3] Later, a cavalry squadron under the command of Bagh Singh and guns with forty gunners under Mir Murad Ali were sent to join the British forces at Ferozepore. The prompt aid given by the Maharaja and the good work of the armed personnel of Bikaner elicited much appreciation from the Governor-General, as was communicated to the Maharaja in a Kharita.[4]

The kingdom of Kabul was plunged in one of its usual wars as a result of a succession dispute. In 1841, when Lord Ellenbrough, the new Governor-General of India sent an expedition

1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 162 and 164
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 86
2. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 165-66
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 86
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

to Kabul, the Maharaja of Bikaner was asked to send two hundred camels; and for this prompt aid, the Maharaja was thanked when he went to meet the Governor-General in Delhi in 1842.[1]

Though not more than a mere symbol of what had once beep the grand Mughal of India, the Rajput princes still preserved their traditional goodwill towards the descendants of the great Akbar even when they sat on a dilapidated throne.[2] It was in the year 1831 that Akbar II the last but one of the Mughal emperors sent his representative, Raja Jawala Parshad, to Maharaja Ratan Singh with a Kharita and Robe of Honour, Mahi Maratib insignia a present of horses, elephant, Nagaras and the title of Narendra Shiromani. The Maharaja received this representative of the Mughal emperor in Darbar which was held in a Shamiana outside the fort. A picture of the emperor of Delhi was placed on a cushion and the Maharaja saluted it when he received the Khilat.[3]

The British Government's attention was drawn to the increasing female infanticide which was taking place among the Rajputs due to their inability to meet the high expenditure which used to be incurred at the time of a daughter's marriage. The Maharaja, whose repugnance for this inhuman custom was already known, welcomed the Kharita the Governor-General sent to him on subject. He forthwith passed a law against infanticide and ordered that the expenditure on marriages should be proportionate to one's income. Persons without land were not to spend more than a hundred rupees out of which ten rupees were to be paid in gift (Tyag) to the Charans. With regard to this reform it is interesting to note that the Maharaja of Bikaner was the first

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, folios 142-45
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 83
2. Akbar II was the son of Shah Alam II. He ascended the throne of Delhi on the 9th bright half of Kartik V.S. 1863 and he expired on 14th dark half of Aswin V.S. 1894. He was an emperor only in name.
3. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 119
   Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, pp. 510-11
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 81

Indian prince to give his assent to the Government's order and to initiate and to take effective measures to suppress the evil.[1]

Maharaja Ratan Singh died on August 7, 1851. Maharajkumar Sher Singh, the elder of his two sons had died in the lifetime of the Maharaja without leaving any issue. The gaddi therefore passed on to his second son, Sardar Singh aged 33 years. Sardar Singh ascended the gaddi on the 19th August, 1851 as the nineteenth ruler of Bikaner.[2]

In the foregoing account of the reign of Maharaja Ratan Singh, we notice that the Maharaja possessed the traditional sense of loyalty as well as the shrewdness to comprehend the trend of political situation and the demand of the changing times. He remained true in his regard for the Mughal emperor, even though this promised him no material advantage. He scrupulously avoided scrambling for power and plunder during this period of disruption between the downfall of the Mughal empire and the rise of the British. Thanks to the choice of an inaccessible region in which the great Bika had chosen to build his State, and thanks to the ability of the rulers of Bikaner to judge the character and strength of the neighbouring Rajput chiefs together with a determined self-control against temptation to fish in troubled waters, the State of Bikaner emerged intact with added prestige out of the political vertex into which the country had plunged after the death of Aurangzeb. Although political cross-winds had ceased to blow, the period of political ferment was still in existence and another serious outburst was yet to come.

Conditions in Bikaner at the time of demise of Maharaja Ratan Singh had not appreciably improved and Maharaja Sardar Singh's reign began under the shadow of a weary tale of insurrections and punitive expeditions resulting, by slow

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1. Dayal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, fol. 150
   Powlett, Op.cit. p. 84
2. Samal Das, Op.cit. Vol. II, p. 512.
   Powlett (Gazetteer of the Bikaner State, p. 87) puts the date of Maharaja Sardar Singh's accession as 1852.

degrees, in the British Government getting the upper hand. The expenditure on the army, necessitated by border problems of the States of Bhawalpur, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Shekhawati and Marwar, had mounted. The disgruntled nobility did not live in peace and the jagirdars and Thakurs were a source of constant concern to the State. The financial condition of the people in general was far from satisfactory.

As a fist step towards the amelioration of the condition of his people, the new Maharaja introduced several reforms. He abolished a local tax called "Bauchh", imposed restrictions on dinners on the occasions of marriages and deaths. He made it obligatory for the Mahajans to submit their accounts for inspection before they could go insolvent and made certain rules for the repayment of loans by insolvents.

Maharaja Sardar Singh sent Mehta Chhogmal to Mr. Elmore for the settlement of the border dispute between Bikaner and British territories and this was successfully resolved.

During the viceroyalty of Lord Bentinck an enactment was passed banning the 'Sati' system and the'Samadhi'i.e. the burial of Sadhus alive. However, these practices continued to be followed in Rajasthan as the rulers attached religious sanctity to them and were reluctant to abolish them. Sir Henry Lawrence, the then Agent to the Governor-General for Rajputana, therefore, sent a Kharita to the Maharaja requesting him to order the abolition of these practices with strict punishment to those who might aid or abet in their performance. The Maharaja readily acceded to the request and in 1854 promulgated orders banning the 'Sati' and 'Samadhi' practices and declaring them as offences and those who aided or abetted in the crime punishable with imprisonment or/and fine.[1]

The upheaval of 1857 which originally seemed to be a small localised affair assumed overwhelming proportions and portended

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1. Ojha, Bikaner Rajya ka Itihas, Vol. II, pp.443-44

disaster for the East India Company. The mutineers had over-run Sirsa, Hissar and Hansi, districts on the northern border of Bikaner State. Maharaja Sardar Singh was quick to grasp the situation and took immediate decision to march his forces to the support of the British.

Brig. Gen. P. Lawrence had deputed Lt. Mildmay to lead the Bikaner troops which were to cooperate with Gen. Van Cortdland in the action in the revolting districts of Sirsa, Hissar and Hansi.[1] Lt. Mildmay found the Maharaja, who was leading his own troops, very enthusiastic. A few days after the arrival of the Bikaner troops, a detachment of five hundred of them was sent by Van Cortdland under the command of Lt. Pears, to occupy Hissar.[2] This detachment was later increased to 1700. They captured and held Hissar for three weeks during which period the Bikaner horse had constantly been employed on detachment duty for the apprehension of criminals and collection of revenue. On the 21st July, over 1000 men and two guns were sent to relieve Hansi which they took over and held for three weeks till the arrival of Gen. Van Cortdland on the 8th August. At Hariana, the

1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.48 regarding "Assistance rendered by the Bikaner State to the British Government during Mutiny 1857"- Extracts from Brig. Gen. P. Lawrence's (Officiating Agent to the Governor-General) letter dated 27.7.1858 to G.F.Edmonstone, Secretary to Government of India, Foreign Department, p. 17,-Appendix IX.

2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.48 regarding "Assistance rendered by the Bikaner State to the British Government during Mutiny, 1857"- Lt. A.G.Holm Mildmay's letter dated 24.9.1857 to Brig. Gen. St. Patrick Lawrence, Agent to the Governor-General, p. 20 -Appendix X.

Bikaner troops had six engagements with the mutineers and drove them back each time[1].On the 19th August, the Bikaner troops repulsed three thousand mutineers near Hazampur. The whole of Bikaner horse was present with Lt. Mildmay at the burning of Hazampur on the 23rd August.[2] During the siege of Bathul by the forces under Lt. Pears, one Khet Singh Rathore of Shampura showed exceptional daring in scaling the walls of the rampart in the face of enemy fire at grave personal risk; and his gallant conduct called for particular notice by Mr. Ford, the Collector, who was present at the time. Two of the Bikaner guns had been sent to the attack on Mangali and Tosham and though eventually they were trapped by the deception of the Musalman inhabitants, and surprised at the gates by the rebel forces, yet the party at the Tehsil fought bravely for the protection of the Tehsildar and Thanedar, losing three chiefs, namely, Thakurs Mokam Singh of Neemrana, Mithu Singh of Kojra and Khuman Singh of Mirpali. Guman Singh Jatoo also succumbed to attacks by overwhelming numbers. In the attack of Jamalpur, a rebel stronghold, the whole of Bikaner force had taken part and it was largely responsible for the defeat of the rebels.[3]

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.48 regarding "Assistance rendered by the Bikaner State to the British Government during Mutiny 1857" -Telegram dated 17.10.1912 from the Chief General Staff, Simla, to Maharaja Ganga Singh.

2. Report of Shah Laxmi Chand from Hansi dated Bhadwa Sudi 5, Samvat 1914 (in my possession). Shah Laxmi Chand died of fever at Hansi as mentioned by Lt. Mildmay in his despatch of the 24th September, 1857.

3. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.48 regarding "Assistance rendered by the Bikaner State to the British Government during Mutiny 1857" -Lt. A.G. Holm Mildmay's letter dated 24.9.1857 to Brig. General P.Lawrence, pp. 20-22.

Briefly, the details of the assistance rendered by Maharaja Sardar Singh to the British Government during the Mutiny according to records[1] in my office are as under:-

The Bikaner troops including sardars[2], ministers and officials were placed in charge of Lt. Mildmay. They marched from Bhadra to Hissar where they met the troops under Gen. Van Cortdland on the 6th bright half of Bhadwa V.S.1914. The mutineers attacked Hissar and tried to break the gates of city walls. Bikaner garrison repulsed the attack and defeated the rebels.[3] About 400 mutineers were killed in the attack and

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.48 regarding "Assistance rendered by the Bikaner State to the British Government during Mutiny 1857".

2. Sardars:- Bhukarka, Sankhu, Sidhmukh, Jassana, Bai, Nimba, Rajpura, Kumbhana, Dadrewa, Hardesar, Birkali, Ajitpura, Meghana, Kahnsar, Tahandesar, Katar, Mensar, Bidasar, Gopalpura, Sandwa, Chahdwas, Harasar, Loha, Khudhi, Kanwari, Sobhasar, Padihara, Kanuta, Sarothia, Kakku, Jogalia, Rawatsar, Manakrasar Jetpur, Jaria, Satun, Lohsna, Kallsar, Dhandhusar, Raisar, Ghadiyala, Kharbara, Janglu, Hadlan, Jetsisar Ranasar and Naharsara.

   Officers:-Maharao Hari Singh Mehta, Faujdar Thakur Hukam Singh Bhati, Rao Guman Singh Baid, Commander Gur Sahai, Shah Laxmi Chand Surana, Shah Lal Chand Surana, Shah Fateh Chand Surana, and Purohit Chiman Ram.

3. Report of Vyas Tej Mal from Hissar dated Bhadwa Badi Amawas, Samvat 1914 mentions :-

   "गांव सिवानी बंगाली रो हल्लो कर सवार ३०० पाला ३०० दरवाजे आय झगड़ो किधो। साब दरवाजो खोलन रो हुकम दियो सो असवार सारा कितना साब साथे आय हुआ और जोधीराम कुमेदान रो ---- सफीलां सूं गोलियां चलाई ---- "

some had been taken prisoner. Thakur Bagh Singh of Bhadra (Kandhal), Thakur Shivji Singh of Bai, Pathan Samat Khan, Sahni Jawanji (with the cavalry) Mehta Shivaji Singh, Purohit Chiman Ram, were in Hissar during the attack. Thakur Bagh Singh of Bhadra was left incharge of Hissar with a detachment of Bidawats, and the rest of the Bikaner army advanced to Hansi, Fatehabad and Tosham. The Thakurs of Sankhu and Neemba were left incharge of Tosham. The Bikaner troops fought an engagement with the mutineers at a place between Jamalpur and Umrai about eight miles from Hansi in which the Mutineers were defeated. In the action there were some casualities among the Bikaner troops, but the number and names cannot be traced. It is, however, mentioned that Padamji Bidawat of Kakku was shot dead. Thakur Sagat Singh of Kanwari, Thakur Nahar Singh of Sarothia, Banirot Binjraj of Shampura, Kushal Singh of Lohsana, Padam Singh Bidawat of Kakku, the Pradhan of Bhukarka, the Pradhan of Jassana, the Pradhan of Rajpura took part in this action in which there were 1100 infantry, 500 cavalry and two guns of the Bikaner State. The total strength of the attacking column was, all told, including the British, Bikaner and Patiala armies, two thousand cavalry, three thousand infantry and guns. The Bikaner forces fought the following battles on different dates:-

Hissar	.....	Bhadwa Sudi 6 V.S. 1914
Tosham	.....	Bhadwa Sudi 7 V.S. 1914
Mangali	.....	Asoj Badi 2 V.S. 1914
Jamalpur	.....	Asoj Badi 7 V.S. 1914
Hansi)		
Sirsa)	.....	Dates not known.
Fatehabad)		

Even after the departure of Gen. Van Cortdland, two hundred of Bikaner troops continued to be employed on the field. The whole of the Bikaner horse was present at the taking of

Jamalpur where they had one man wounded. The Maharaja himself was present for some time with a considerable force on the front at great risk to his life. The events, that had occurred during the time, show how valuable his presence was. It kept the ill-disposed Ranghars of Mangali, Srivaisu and other villages quiet for the time. One unfortunate event was that nearly the whole force had been rendered unfit for service at Hansi by fever, and many men died.

Gen. Van Cortdland never had any occasion to complain of their delay in or unwillingness on the part of the Bikaner forces to comply at once to the utmost of their ability with any requisition that was made by them. The assistance given by the Maharaja's troops was considered by the British such as to warrant their sending him a Kharita of acknowledgement and thanks.[1] The steadfastness of Bikaner was largely responsible for preventing discontent spreading to the Punjab. The British authorities gratefully recognized the importance of the support which they received from the Bikaner State in the hour of their trial. Brig. Gen. P. Lawrence in his official despatch to the Government of India described as follows the services which the Maharaja had rendered:-

> " If I have exceeded the limits of my duty in bringing this case before His Excellency the sense of justice to a faithful ally, and of consciousness that my Government would not desire to allow this really valuable service of the Bikaner Chief to go unrewarded, must be my excuse, which I feel confident will be accepted by His Lordship."[2]

The Agent to the Governor-General Rajputana, wrote on the 21st December, 1860 to the Secretary to Government of India, Foreign

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1. Kharitasof Lord Canning, dated 1.12.1857, 7.1.1858 and 18.7.1858.
2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.48 regarding "Assistance rendered by the Bikaner State to the British Government during Mutiny 1857", pp.28-29; letter dated 21.12.1860 from the Agent to the Governor-General, Rajputana, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, Appendix XI.

Department that the Maharaja of Bikaner had from the commencement of the outbreak actively exhibited the most loyal friendship and devotion to the British Government and warmly cooperated with them in the field.[1] The Government of India was already well acquainted with the Maharaja's services in rescuing and affording refuge to several Europeans.[2] When the troops in the Punjab had been employed under Gen. Van Cortdland in Hansi and Hissar, the Maharaja, at the head of his troops, proceeded to his own frontier and remained prepared to join them wherever and whenever required. He had presented the most notable example not only to his own dependents but to the whole province of Rajputana and had displayed a spirit and energy not easily to be met with. The Maharaja was considered to be deserving of the highest scale of reward which the Government was pleased to sanction to the most meritorious Rajput.[3]

Maharaja Sardar Singh by his courage and the example of his loyalty checked disaffection and gave confidence to the others. No prince in Rajputana save Bikaner took the field in person in the favour of British. No person gave the like aid in searching for and rescuing the Europeans. No prince and no other person exhibited so clearly his object in giving the British his active assistance and none but the Bikaner ruler had suffered so heavy a loss while fighting purely in the British cause. It was for these reasons that the Agent to the Governor-General considered

1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 48 regarding "Assistance rendered by the Bikaner State to the British Government during Mutiny, 1857", pp. 28-29; letter dated 21.12.1860 from the Agent to the Governor-General, Rajputana to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.
2. Ibid, p. 27; Gen. G.St.P. Lawrence, Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana's despatch dated 6.1.1859 as referred to in his letter dated the 21st December, 1860.
3. Ibid.

the loyalty and good services of the Bikaner Maharaja superior to those of any other chief in Rajputana including Jaipur such as to entitle the Maharaja in his opinion to be ranked in the same category as the Maharajas of Rewa and Charkhari who had been rewarded with grants of land and in addition to the Khilat and other distinctions.[1] Obviously, therefore, the services of Maharaja Sardar Singh were praised by the British and forty-one villages in Hissar district yielding a revenue of Rs.14,291/- were conferred upon him with effect from the 1st May, 1862. Khilats and presents were accorded by the Governor-General in Council for his distinguished services during the Mutiny.[2] Sardar Singh also received congratulatory Kharitas from Capt. Hamilton, Assistant Agent to the Governor-General and Alexander Skinner and others.[3] Queen Victoria's appreciation of the Maharaja's assistance was conveyed by Sir Charles Wood in his letter dated 15th December, 1859.[4]

The forty-one villages conferred upon the Maharaja had been claimed by the Bikaner State for a very long time. The claim was made by the Maharaja through Hindumal after the Sikh war. Forty-five villages were claimed on the ground that they were in the possession of the Bikaner State for over three hundred years yielding an income of Rs.30,000/- and the Govt. of

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.48 regarding "The Assistance rendered by the Bikaner State to the British Government during Mutiny 1857", p. 27, Gen. Lawrence, Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana's despatch dated 6.1.1859 as referred to in his letter dated the 21st December, 1860
2. Lord Canning's Kharita dated 28.4.1860 (in my possession)
3. Capt. Hamilton's Kharita dated 11.12.1861 (in my possession); Alexander Skinner's Kharita dated 5.7.1861(in my possession); Gen. Lawrence's Kharita dated 10.5.1861 (in my possession).
4. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.48 regarding "Assistance rendered by the Bikaner State to the British Government during Mutiny 1857", p. 51; Parliamentary Papers 1860, House of Commons Paper No. 77, Mutiny correspondence etc. p. 144.
   The letter of Sir Charles Wood is still preserved in the Archives of the Government of Rajasthan at Bikaner,- Appendix XII.

India rewarded the the services of the State by transferring forty-one villages yielding a revenue of Rs.14,291/-.[1] In fact the award of the villages in 1862 was virtually a retransfer of the villages which had been forcibly confiscated.

In 1859 when Queen Victoria assumed the title of the Empress of India, Maharaja Sardar Singh changed the inscription of the Bikaner State coins by removing the name of the Mughal emperor and having the phrase "Aurang Arya Hind wa Queen Victoria 1859" inscribed on one face and "Zarb Sri Bikaner 1916" on the other.[2]

In 1862 the Maharaja received a Sanad from the Governor-General acknowledging the Maharaja's right of adoption.[3] The Sanad provided that on the failure of natural heirs, the adoption by the Maharaja and the future rulers of a successor according to Hindu law and customs of his race would be recognized and confirmed by the British Government so long as the rulers were loyal to the Crown and faithful to the terms of the various treaties and engagements.[4] It may be mentioned here that Lord Dalhousie had restricted adoptions of heirs by States in cases of failure of natural heirs. But these restrictions applied only to the States which had either been created by the East India Company or which had been conquered by the Company and regranted or which had been dependant on the Peshwa and on whose being overthrown by the Company, had become dependent on the Company.[5] This doctrine of lapse, therefore, did not affect the Bikaner State.

As a result of the depleted exchequer at the time, the Maharaja had naturally to tap all possible sources for collection of money, and pressure was put on State officials to collect as

1. Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp. 278, 290-91.
2. This was permitted vide General Lawrence's Kharita dated the 18th August, 1858 (in my possession)
3. Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, p. 278 and also pp.35-36
4. Ibid, pp. 35-36
5. Shastri, Op.cit. p. 20

much money as possible.[1] One of the consequences of this drive was that the State officials collected taxes at very high rates[2] even from the residents of the forty-one villages of Tibi then only just retransferred to the State. The inhabitants of these villages made a complaint to the British and on inquiry by the Commissioner of Hissar, who was deputed for the purpose, the complaints were found to be true.[3] On this the Maharaja was asked to ensure that the rates fixed for these villages under the settlement of 1856 were adhered to. The Maharaja not only agreed to do so but in order to compensate the villagers for the hardships already suffered by them, extended the period of settlement by seven years.[4]

In 1868 an Assistant to the Agent to the Governor-General was appointed[5] for Bikaner with his headquarters at Sujangarh. The primary object of this was to check dacoity which was rampant near the triple boundary of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner, but he was also given the political charge of Bikaner. Capt. P.W. Powlett was the first officer to be appointed.[6]

Soon after the appointment of Capt. Powlett as the Political Agent for Bikaner, the Thakurs of Mahajan, Jassana, Bai, Sidhmukh Kahnsar, Birkali, Meghana, Hardesar, Kanwari, Sainsar and Kharbara petitioned[7] to him against the Maharaja alleging that-

(a) certain villages of their Pattas had been confiscated;

(b) money was being extracted from them in the shape of nazrana; and

(c) various cesses were being levied on them.

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1. Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp. 278-79
2. Ibid, pp. 278-79
3. Lord Lawrence's Kharita dated 16.5.1868 (in my possession)
   Col. Keeling's (Agent to the Governor-General) Kharita dated 19.11.1868 (in my possession);
   Capt. Powlett's Kharitas, dated 3.5.1869 and 29.6.1869 (in my possession).
4. Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, p. 278
5. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 88
6. Ibid.
7. Report on the Political Administration of the Rajputana States 1870-71, No. LXXXIV -Sujangarh Agency Report, p.211

Capt. Powlett and Pandit Manphool, the then Diwan, went into the allegations and it was decided that -

a) All villages forming part of an estate held under valid grants at the time of the Maharaja's accession and resumed subsequently were to be restored;

b) the commutation money for each horse was fixed at Rs.200/- for ten years, whereafter the figure could be revised in consideration of the then existing circumstances. This figure included everything except nazrana on accession to an estate.

This decision was accepted by all the Thakurs concerned except the Thakur of Mahajan who left Bikaner in 1869.[1] The Thakur of Mahajan was dissatisfied because firstly his claim for the restoration of three villages was not accepted, and secondly, that by being called upon to accept a lease for a term of years, his position was being made like that of a contractor, and was derogatory to his status as a premier noble of the State. The Political Agent was, however, of the opinion that the agreement arrived at was fair and so did not think it proper to advise the Maharaja to make any concessions to Thakur Amar Singh of Mahajan. On the other hand he strongly advised the Thakur to accept the agreement, but to no avail.[2]

The Sujangarh Agency Report for the year 1870 mentions that at about this time, the Thakurs of Mahajan, Churu and Bhadra were harbouring robbers, murderers and other criminals who paid them handsomely for the protection granted to them and that these plunderers and criminals were a terror to the area of their activities. They had become very bold, and did not hesitate to commit daylight robberies even in bazars.[1] These activities of the Thakurs had become the source of constant embarrassment to the Maharaja who was helpless as these Thakurs disregarded his authority. Capt. Powlett, to whom these chiefs

1.Report on the Political Administration of the Rajputana States, 1870-71, No: LXXXIV -Sujangarh Agency Report, p.212.

2.Ibid.

had approached for the redress of their alleged grievances against the Maharaja, made it abundantly clear to them that the British authority was not going to tolerate the existing state of affairs and that their "Sarnas" had to be broken up. It was gratifying that the advice was heeded, 'Sarnas' broken up and written guarantees for future good conduct given.[1]

At the close of the reign of Maharaja Ratan Singh the State had become encumbered with a debt of about 8½ lacs rupees and the biggest item of expenditure was the army, the maintenance of which was necessitated by the predatory activities of the jagirdars and the need for protecting Jaisalmer, Bhawalpur, Jodhpur, Jaipur and Shekhawati frontier. The Maharaja, therefore, had to make heavy exactions from the people, and the taxes were further augmented by fresh ones such as the nazrana first introduced by Diwan Guman Singh in 1864.[2]

During the first nineteen years of the reign of Maharaja Sardar Singh, there were as many as eighteen changes[3] in the office of the Diwan, the dismissal of each being caused by his inability to meet the pecuniary demand of the Darbar. The mode of collection of nazrana was open to abuse. The amount of nazrana was not regulated by any rules and the tax collectors, called Chirayats, were at liberty to collect as much nazrana and Rakam as they possibly could. They received, in addition, a yearly sum as Bidayagi on furnishing a receipt for full payment of all the State dues from a Pattedar. Besides, the Diwans knowing full well the insecurity of their office, tried to make

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1. Report on the Political Administration of the Rajputana States 1870-71 No. LXXXIV -Sujangarh Agency Report, p. 212
2. Ibid, p. 203
3. Powlett, Op.cit. p. 87 - 1852, Guman Singh Baid and Lachhi Ram Rakhecha; 1853, Lachhi Ram; 1854, Guman Singh; 1855, Pt. Dojainant; 1856-63, Ram Lal Dwarkani; 1864, Guman Singh; 1865, Ram Lal; 1866, Man Mal Rakhecha; 1866, Sheo Lal Nahta; 1867, Fatehchand Surana; 1867, Purohit Ganga Ram; 1867, Shah Mal Kochar; 1862 and 1868, Man Mal; 1868, Sheo Lal Mohta; 1868, Lakshmi Chand Nahta; 1868, Wilayat Hussain; and 1869, Pandit Manphool.

and amass as much money for themselves as they could during the short tenure of office.[1]

The Political agent reported to the Paramount Power that he had no hesitation in stating that life and property were not safe in the Bikaner State and that a bribe or a word of favour was sufficient to shield even the worst criminal. It was under these conditions of lawlessness existing as a result of the predatory inclinations of the jagirdars coupled with the pecuniary demand of the ~~Darbar~~ Maharaja and corruption in the services leading to the miserable plight of the subjects that the British interfered most actively in the internal administration of the State and imposed a Diwan, Pandit Manphool C.S.I., ~~on~~ of their choice, on the Maharaja in August, 1869.[2] Later, finding that Pandit Manphool was virtually a nominal Diwan and that real power lay in those favourites who were constantly in attendance on the Maharaja, the political agent pointed out to the Maharaja his obligation and reminded him that he was responsible to the Supreme Government for the proper administration of his State. He further suggested that immediate steps be taken to remedy this state of affairs.[3]

Another significant link in the relationship of the British with the Maharaja was forged by the signing of the Extradition Treaty in 1869.[4] According to this treaty, any person whether a British or foreign subject committing a heinous offence in British territory and seeking shelter in the Bikaner State territory, was to be apprehended and delivered by the Bikaner Government to the British Government on requisition. Similarly, any one being a subject of Bikaner and committing a heinous offence within the limits of the Bikaner State and seeking

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1. Report on the Political Administration of the Rajputana States 1870-71, No. LXXXIV -Sujangarh Agency Report, p.203
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid, p. 205
4. Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp. 280 and 295.

asylum in the British territory was to be apprehended and handed over to the former on requisition. Non-Bikaneri subjects committing heinous offences within the Bikaner State territory were to be apprehended and cases against them were to be investigated by such courts as the British Government might direct. Such cases were to be tried by the court of the political officer in whose political supervision Bikaner State was placed. The treaty further stipulated that neither Government would make such surrenders except on requisitions made in the proper manner and that such persons were to be surrendered only upon such evidence of the crime as would justify their apprehension and sustain the charges. The treaty also detailed those offences which fell under the category of heinous offences.[1]

The reign of Maharaja Sardar Singh is important in respect of the relationship with the Central Power because it was during this period that the British for the first time carried out a survey of the mal-administration in the State, sent Capt. Bradford to conduct an enquiry into the relationship between the Maharaja and his sardars and to make an effort to tone up the administration of the State leading to the establishment of a Council consisting of Pandit Manphool, Man Mal Rakhecha, Shah Mal and Dhanpat Kothari.

The relations which existed between Maharaja Sardar Singh and the British were most friendly and cordial. Lord Bentinck in his Kharita sent to the Maharaja at the time of his relinquishing office expressed that the intimate connection which happily existed between the Maharaja and the Honourable Company had been strengthened and confirmed and hoped that in his successor the Maharaja would experience the same disposition to cultivate and improve the existing harmony and good understanding between the two governments and show an inviolable adherence to the engagements by which the two were indisolubly connected.[2]

1. Aitchison, Op.cit. p. 295.
2. Lord Bentinck's Kharita dated 4.2.1835 (in my possession)

In 1936 Lord Auckland gave expression to similar sentiments when he wrote to the Maharaja saying that he was cordially disposed to maintain the relations of harmony and friendship subsisting between the two States and establish the utmost degree of individual friendship with the Maharaja.[1]

Then again it was as the result of these very cordial relations as also the assistance rendered by the Maharaja during the Mutiny of 1857 that the Maharaja was, by his good offices, in 1859, able to secure pardon for Tantia Tope and his followers with the only stipulation that any of them who might subsequently be convicted of murder should be brought up for conviction, if required.[2]

In 1862 Lord Elgin wrote to the Maharaja thanking him for the friendship shown towards the British government during his tenure of office and hoped that the same would further be strengthened under his successor.[3] Similar sentiments were also expressed by Lord Lawrence at the time of his relinquishing office of the Governor-General of India[4] and Lord Northbrooke hoped that these friendly relations would continue to be strengthened during his tenure of office.[5]

Yet, when the question of locating an Assistant to the Agent to the Governor-General at Sujangarh arose in 1868 and the Maharaja protested against the same,[6] the Agent to the Governor-General wrote back to say that the terms of the treaty did not prohibit the deputation of a political officer in the Bikaner territory and that the treaty exhibited a position of subordinatio on the part of the Bikaner State towards the British power in India.[7] The interpretation of the terms of the treaty had been changed in just fifty years of its signing.

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1. Lord Auckland's Kharita dated 7.3.1836(in my possession)
2. Munshi Jawala Sahai, Loyal Rajputana, p. 292
3. Lord Elgin's Kharita dated 1.3.1862 (in my possession)
4. Lord Lawrence's Kharita dated 11.1.1869(in my possession)
5. Lord Northbrooke's Kharita dated 3.5.1872 (in my possession)
6. Maharaja Sardar Singh's Kharita dated 24.2.1868 to Col. Keeling, Agent to the Governor-General.
7. Col. Keeling's Kharita dated 7.4.1868(in my possession)

CHAPTER VII

An Era of Active Interference

Maharaja Sardar Singh, who died on the 16th May, 1872, had no male issues and had also not left behind any declaration regarding the adoption of a successor to the throne.[1] He had, however, brought up as members of the royal family two grand-nephews, Dungar Singh and Jaswant Singh, both descendants of Maharaja Gaj Singh's second son, Chhatar Singh. Maharani Bhatianiji being the senior Maharani, the decision for adoption naturally lay with her and she favoured the adoption of Dungar Singh. But Maharani Pugalianiji, though the junior Maharani, was the favourite of Sardar Singh and thus had a good deal of influence at court. She favoured the adoption of Jaswant Singh. This led to the formation of two parties -one favouring the adoption of Dungar Singh and the other of Jaswant Singh. All possible pressure was brought to bear upon Maharani Bhatianiji to adopt Jaswant Singh. She, however, would not do anything without the guidance of the Diwan, Pandit Manphool, and the previous approval of the Government of India. Capt. Burton, the Assistant to the Agent to the Governor-General, who was informed of the demise of Maharaja Sardar Singh and the controversy about the adoption of a successor, came to Bikaner on the 22nd May, 1872 for investigation. Already fully cognisant of the facts, he upheld the right of Maharani Bhatianiji to adopt a successor.[2] Meanwhile Maharana Shambhu Singh[3] of Udaipur, who was the maternal

1. Sahiwala Arjun Singh ka Jiwan Charitra, Vol. II, p.20 as quoted by Ojha, Bikaner Rajya ka Itihas, Vol. II, p.462.
2. Jawala Sahai; Waqiat-i-Rajputana, Vol. III, pp.633-37
3. Maharaj Lall Singh's sister Nandkanwar was married in A.D.1848 to Sadul Singh who was the eldest son of Maharaj Sher Singh of Bagod. The offspring of Nandkanwar and Sadul Singh was Shambhu Singh who, after the death of Maharana Sarup Singh, became the Maharana of Udaipur. Maharana Shambhu Singh was thus related to Maharaj Lall Singh (maternal uncle) father of Maharaja Dungar Singh. Maharana Shambhu Singh was therefore approached by the supporters of Dungar Singh and the Maharana helped him whole-heartedly.

uncle of Dungar Singh, also sent a message to Col. Brooke, the Agent to the Governor-General, upholding the claim of Dungar Singh for adoption.[1] Col. Brooke being satisfied with the right of Maharani Bhatianiji to adopt a successor and the choice of Dungar Singh as the rightful successor, recommended the case of Dungar Singh's adoption to Lord Northbrooke who signified his acceptance in a Kharita sent by the Agent to the Governor-General on the 11th July, 1872.[2] Dungar Singh ascended the throne on the 11th August, 1872 as the twentieth ruler of Bikaner and the formal investiture was performed by the Agent to the Governor-General on the 22nd January, 1873[3] when he was also presented with the Viceroy's complimentary Kharita dated the 28th October, 1872.[4]

During the period from the demise of Sardar Singh to the time the formal installation of Dungar Singh on the gaddi of Bikaner, the administration of the State was carried on by a council under the presidentship of Capt. Burton. When Dungar Singh was installed and full powers of administration[5] of the State conferred upon him, he was advised to continue the administration with the assistance of Pandit Manphool, the Diwan.[6]

1. Letter from Maharana Shambhu Singh to Saniwala Arjun Singh dated 13th bright half of Vaisakh VS 1928 as quoted by Ojha in his "Bikaner Rajya ka Itihas" Vol. II, p.465.
2. Col. J.C.Brooke's Kharita dated 11.7.1872 and also his Kharita dated - illegible.
3. Jawala Sahai, Waqiat-i-Rajputana, Vol. III, p. 645
4. Lord Northbrooke's Kharita dated 23.10.1872 (in my possession).
5. Col. J.C.Brooke's Kharita dated 11.7.1872.
6. Jawala Sahai, Waqiat-i-Rajputana, Vol. III, p.645. Also Col. J.C.Brooke's Kharita dated -illegible.

   Pandit Manphool had worked in British India on various posts and his work had won universal approbation and praise. Gradually he was promoted to the post of Assistant Commissioner. He had also been granted the title of the Companion of the Star of India. He had been appointed as the Diwan of Bikaner in 1869 and he tried to check undesirable activities. It was mainly due to his intelligent approach and tactful handling of the situation that the complicated issues arising out of the conflict between the ruler and the jagirdars regarding the increase in taxes could be decided peacefully. It was again under his supervision that settlement operations were started in pargana Hanumangarh and this was highly spoken by British officers. From Bikaner he went to Alwar where he worked as guardian to Maharaja Mangal Singh for a period of three years.

However, soon afterwards the chief Thakurs and other subjects of the State made a complaint to the Political Agent about the mal-administration of the State and alleged that all kinds of people were being allowed to interfere in the affairs of the State. As a result, the Agent to the Governor-General sent a Kharita[1] warning the Maharaja against the sad state of affairs and reminding him of the promises made by Sardar Singh, the late Maharaja, to effect reforms. He urged Dungar Singh to do so now. Yet the Political Agent was warned by the Government of India at the same time not to interfere in the domestic concerns of the Maharaja on any account or to exceed the clear limits of policy laid down by the Government. The Maharaja being very impressed with the friendly, though firm, language in which the Kharita was couched, immediately issued instructions for improvement in the administration.

In December 1873, Pandit Manphool resigned for reasons of health and Maharaj Lall Singh[2] was appointed president of the

1. Col. Lewis Paley's Kharita dated 1.8.1873(in my possession)
2. Maharaj Lall Singh was the father of Dungar Singh and great grandson of Chhatar Singh, the younger son of Gaj Singh. He was born on the 12th bright half of Marghshirs VS 1888. He was wise, magnanimous and considerate. He worked for many years as the president of the Bikaner Raj Council and during this period he gave proper advice to Maharaja Dungar Singh. The death of Maharaja Dungar Singh at an early age of 33 years gave a very great shock to Maharaj Lall Singh who expired within a month on the 14th dark half at the age of 56. Maharaja Dungar Singh had, in his life time, got a temple built at Shivbari and named it Laleshwar Mahadev temple as a mark of affection for his father.

   His son Dungar Singh was a claimant for the gaddi of Bikaner. His rival candidate was Mukan Singh's son Jaswant Singh. Mukan Singh was the son of Kharag Singh who was the third brother of Sakti Singh. From the following genealogical table, it is absolutely clear that Jaswant Singh's claim could not be considered stronger than that of Dungar Singh:-

Maharaja Gaj Singh
|
Chhatar Singh
|
Dalel Singh

Sakti Singh	Madan Singh	Kharag Singh	Khuman Singh
Lall Singh	Keht Singh	Mukan Singh	Nathu Singh
Dungar Singh		Jaswant Singh.	

Sahiwala Arjun Singh in his autobiography Vol. II, p.20 mentions that the name of Kharag Singh's son was Hari Singh. This information is incorrect because Kharag Singh had no

...contd.next pag

Council vice Jaswant Singh Baid.[1]

The Thakurs of Bhadra and Churu, who had consistently been trying to create trouble, had now begun to give shelter to lawless elements whom they employed for carrying on robbery and plunder. The Maharaja drew the attention of the Agent to the Governor-General to this state of affairs and he at once took necessary steps to suppress their activities and obtained an undertaking from them for future good conduct.[2]

There were some local disturbances during this period. The Sujangarh Agency Report for the year 1873-74 records that the Political Agent reported to the Government that on the 5th August, a serious affray took place near the village of Jodhasar between Thakur Megh Singh of Jassana and Thakur Man Singh of Kahnsar . The cause of the dispute was a piece of land to which both parties laid claim, but which in reality belonged to the village of Devasar. The Political Agent further reported that Thakur Megh Singh, pattedar of Jassana, sent some ploughmen with ten armed sowars and twenty armed footmen to cultivate this land. Thakur Man Singh of Kahnsar, having been informed of it, despatched in the first instance nine men, and later he went himself to the spot attended by forty armed men. After an altercation, a fight ensued in which two of Thakur Megh Singh's men were killed and four wounded and one man of Thakur Man Singh's party was killed and three others wounded. The Agent adds that the case had been repeatedly brought to the notice of the Maharaja so that the persons concerned should be punished according to their guilt and measures taken to prevent the repetition of such disputes. The matter was at last investigated and the sardars and their followers were punished with imprisonment and fines and the contending parties were bound over to keep the peace for the future.[3]

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son named Hari Singh and the rival candidate of Dungar Singh was in fact Jaswant Singh son of Mukan Singh.

1. Jawala Sahai, Waqiat-i-Rajputana, Vol. III, p. 647
2. Ibid, p. 667
3. Report on the Political Administration of the Rajputana States, No: CXVI, report for the year 1873-74 -Sujangarh Agency Reports, p. 220

Many of the jagirdars were disaffected towards the Maharaja. They demanded restoration of the lands of which they had been dispossessed under some regulation or other. According to the Sujangarh Agency Report for the year 1873-74, these cases were classified into three categories; first, there were complaints which were rejected by the Maharaja on account of the length of period during which the petitioners or their families had been dispossessed of the patta or the village claimed. There were claims to lands which had been admitted by the Maharaja but had come under the possession of other Thakurs according to the ten year settlement of 1869-70. The third category covered claims which were acknowledged by the Maharaja in respect of certain Khalsa or other lands. According to the Political Agent, Maharaja Dungar Singh had very properly offered lands on very favourable terms to the claimants in the first category and promised to guarantee certain privileges to enable them to gain a comfortable livelihood. In the second case the Maharaja had pointed out to the petitioners how inadvisable it would be to interfere with the arrangements made under the settlement but they had been promised that their cases would be brought before the commission about to sit for adjustment of the Thakurs' cases. In the third case, villages had been restored by the Maharaja to the claimants and sanads granted.

The jagirdars, however, did not feel satisfied with the award and Amar Singh, the leading Thakur of the State with a few other sardars, left the capital and assembled at Deshnoke, from where they went to Abu to represent their grievances to the Agent to the Governor-General.[1] The Agent expressed his regret but hoped that the committee proposed to be set up would do justice to them. The Maharaja, in the meanwhile, had appointed a committee to go into the claims brought forward by the jagirdars and had even sent a Kharita to the Political Agent to act as the president of the committee. It being thought

1. Report on the Political Administration of the Rajputana States, No. CXVI, Report for the year 1873-74- Sujangarh Agency Reports, p.220

inadvisable for the Political Agent to associate himself actively with the committee, he said that he would be content with giving his advice and good offices to the committee. The Thakur of Mahajan and some of the other jagirdars did not, however, agree to their cases being examined by the committee and their cases were disposed of by the Maharaja personally, while the others were disposed of by the committee. Though many of the complaints were carefully looked into, the jagirdars continued to remain disaffected.[1]

On the 24th September 1874 the Maharaja, accompanied by the Assistant Agent to the Governor-General and a few sardars, proceeded to Sambhar where he met Col. Lewis Paley, the Agent to the Governor-General.[2]

In 1875, the Mahajans of Bidasar, a leading thikana of the State, complained to the Maharaja of oppressions by the Thakur, and moved over from Bidasar to Ladnu. The Maharaja at once instituted enquiries, and took appropriate measures. The Mahajans returned to Bidasar. Likewise the complaints of the tenantry against the oppressions of the Thakurs of Bhukarka and Sankhu were also enquired into. These prompt actions on the part of the Maharaja resulted in considerably reducing the tendency of the jagirdars to harrass their ryots.[3]

While, according to an order issued by Maharaja Sardar Singh, land revenue recoverable from the jagirdars had been assessed for ten years and no enhancement was to be made during the period, the jagirdars considered themselves at liberty to raise the land revenue payable by their tenants. On a representation, made by the tenants, the Maharaja issued orders to extend the law for the benefit of the tenants. The rental payable by the tenants was not to be enhanced till the expiry of ten years.[4]

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1. Jawala Sahai, Waqiat-i-Rajputana, Vol. III, pp.670-71
2. Ibid, p. 648
3. Ibid, p. 672
4. Ibid.

About April 1875, an attempt was made on the life of the Maharaja by the supporters of the rival candidate, Jaswant Singh, for the gaddi by trying to administer poison but it failed as the plot leaked out. The incident having been brought to the notice of the Agent to the Governor-General,[1] he sent a Kharita to the Maharaja asking for investigation being made. In another Kharita dated 25.8.1875[2] he acknowledges receipt of the commission's report on the subject and calls for the final decision also being intimated to him. The Agent's Kharita[3] dated 12.2.1876 states that the Government of India have been informed of the decision and that no interference by them would be advisable.

In November, 1875 the Maharaja proceeded on a pilgrimage to Hardwar and Gaya with the Assistant Agent to the Governor-General and some sardars and officers of the State. On his return journey he visited many important cities, among them, Mathura, Hathras, Prayag, Kashi, Lucknow, Kanpur and Agra. On arrival at Agra on the 21st January, 1876, he was received at the station by the Agent to the Governor-General. His stay at Agra synchronised with the visit of the then Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) to the place. Dungar Singh was one of the distinguished personages who received the Prince of Wales at the station on the 25th January, 1876. The Maharaja paid a courtesy call on the Prince of Wales on the 26th January, 1876 which was returned by the Prince of Wales on the 27th January 1876. The Maharaja also attended the banquet given to the Prince of Wales on the occasion with which he was greatly impressed.[4]

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1. A.C. Lyall's (Agent to the Governor-General) Kharita dated 20.4.1875 (in my possession)
2. A.C. Lyall's Kharita dated 25.8.1875 (in my possession)
3. A.C. Lyall's Kharita dated 12.2.1876 (in my possession)
4. Jawala Sahai, Waqiat-i-Rajputana, Vol. III, pp.650-51

When, on the assumption of the title of Queen Empress of India by Her Majesty Queen Victoria, Lord Lytton, the then Viceroy, held a Darbar in Delhi on the 1st January, 1877, Maharaja Dungar Singh was also invited. He, however, could not be present at the Darbar as he had to proceed to Kutch to marry the daughter of the Maharaja of Kutch. The Government of India, therefore, sent him a flag[1] in commemoration of the occasion and this was received by the Maharaja with due formality at a Darbar specially held for the purpose.[2]

The British policy of interference in the internal affairs of the princely States had given the States' people a wrong impression. They thought that the real rulers were the British and started submitting memorials directø to the Supreme Government against the decisions of their own princes. The stationing of a Political Agent at Bikaner strengthened this impression and the action taken by the disgruntled Sidhs in 1877 made this clear to the Maharaja as well as to the British.

On the 1st August, 1877 about seventy to eighty Sidhs who, at the time, held villages and occupied extensive lands in the State, rushed to the Agency and made noisy demonstrations for the release of their leader Jasnath who had been arrested by the State authorities on certain charges. The Political Agent tried to persuade them to place their grievances before the Maharaja, but they insisted on the Political Agent's intervention and bringing about a settlement, failing which they threatened to lay down their lives by committing suicide at the door of the Agency. The Political Agent called for the Bikaner Vakil to apprise him of the situation after which the Vakil left to inform the Maharaja. For two days negotiations were carried on between the Maharaja and the Sidhs. On the morning of the 3rd August, the Political Agent learnt that the Sidhs had prepared

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1. The flag is still in my possession and is displayed in the Bikaner Fort Museum.
2. Ojha, Bikaner Rajya ka Itihas, Vol. II, p.475

four graves and that four of them were to commit suicide. He thereupon sent his head munshi to ask them to desist from doing so but they were adament. He then called some of their leading men, warned them that persons aiding or abetting suicide were liable to be severely punished and that they alone would be to blame in such an eventuality. The Agent was not going to be intimidated by their threats. By this they were cowed down, and they agreed not to commit suicide but added that they would not take any food unless Jasnath was set free. A settlement, at last, was reached between the Maharaja and the Sidhs. Jasnath was allowed to live with one Hukam Singh Faujdar, in whom the Sidhs had confidence and Hukam Singh was to see that Jasnath did not leave Bikaner till the charges against him were investigated and cleared. Though the Sidhs were intent upon seeking the intervention of the Political Agent, he was very careful not to do anything beyond using his influence with the Maharaja and advise him to act with justice and moderation. Early in January, 1878 the case was amicably settled and the Sidhs returned to their homes. However, they again began to cause trouble and in June 1880 Jasnath had to be arrested again and was sentenced to imprisonment for three and a half years with a fine of Rs.50/-. The Political Agent hoped that this time the followers of Jasnath would not prove to be troublesome and that the Maharaja would not be intimidated by their threats.[1]

In 1878 the Russian Ambassador visited Kabul and was received there very cordially. This led to an apprehension of Kabul coming under the influence of Russia. In order to explain the view point of the British Government and to counter-act any possible Russian influence, Neville Chamberlain, under instructions from Lord Lytton, sought permission to pass through Khyber and go to Kabul. This was, however, refused, and war became imminent. Maharaja Dungar Singh sent a Kharita on the

1. Report on the Political Administration of Rajputana States for the year 1877-78, No. CLI -Sujangarh Agency Report, pp.238-39

26th November, 1878 to the Agent to the Governor-General, Major Bradford, offering the services of his army. While greatly appreciating the prompt and generous offer of help, the Governor-General asked, at the first instance, for some camels being supplied for transport work with the Indian army. Eight hundred camels were supplied by the Maharaja to the Government of India.[1]

Salt was being manufactured at various places in the Bikaner State, Lunkaransar and Chhapar being some of the principal centres, and it came in the way of the monopoly of the salt trade of the Government of India. However, the Government of India could not demand the closure of the salt works, but could certainly impose restrictions on its production and its export and import. The Bikaner Salt Agreement was signed in 1879 between the Bikaner State and the Government of India on the 24th January, 1879 and ratified on the 8th May, 1879. This treaty provided that salt would be manufactured in the State only at Chhapar and Lunkaransar and that their total aggregate yearly out-turn should not exceed thirty thousand maunds. It further provided that no other salt would be imported or exported from the State except the salt on which duty had been levied by the British Government. It was also stipulated that no transit duty would be levied by the State upon the salt on which duty had been levied by the British Government. It was also stipulated that no transit duty would be levied by the State upon the salt on which duty had been levied by the British Government and that all exports of Bhang, Ganja, spirits, opium or other intoxicating drugs or preparations from the State to British territory would be prohibited. In the case of additional salt being required for consumption by the people of the State, the State was authorised under the treaty to procure upto twenty thousand maunds annually from

1. Smith, Oxford History of India, p.572
   Erskine, Gazetteer of Bikaner, p.328

the salt works at Phalodi and Didwana at a price of eight annas per maund, and a concessional rate of half the duty leviable at the time of purchase should be charged on the purchases. The Maharaja was also to get under the terms of the treaty a sum of Rs.6000/- annually from the British Government for the observance of certain of these stipulations.[1]

The Political Agent brought to the notice of the Maharaja the success of the measures adopted by the Jodhpur Government in respect of Baoris and other predatory tribes and the consequent improvement in the maintenance of law and order, and urged upon the Maharaja, the need for similar measures in Bikaner. Following this advice, ten thanas were established in the area and 112 sowars distributed amongst them. Yet owing to lack of cooperation among the officials of the various States, it was noticed that the tracks of offenders leading from the territory of one State to another were not followed up, resulting in criminals remaining at large. In 1880 the Political Agent urged upon the Maharaja to take further action and strict instructions were issued by the Maharaja to all the thanas and officials on the border to assist the trackers. A new Girai officer was appointed with instructions to visit each thana.

The ancient practice by which the Maharaja had been provided with horsemen, camelry and foot-soldiers by the pattedars, had already been commuted into cash payments during the reign of Maharaja Sardar Singh and the amounts so fixed were subject to revision after a period of ten years depending on circumstances. This revision became due in 1879 but Maharaja Dungar Singh did not move in the matter till 1881 when on August 26, he sent a Kharita to Major Roberts, Assistant to the Agent to the Governor-General, informing him that he would not revise the demands till such time as "settlement" of the lands was carried out by an officer of the Government

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1. Aitchison, A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Vol. III, pp.279-80 and 293-95.

of India, and asked him for the loan of the services of such an officer. A copy of this Kharita was also sent to the acting Agent to the Governor-General.

The Maharaja in the meanwhile, arranged for the survey of crown lands in the Hanumangarh tehsil and it was actually started in June, 1882. In October 1882 the Thakurs of Mahajan Bidasar, Bhukarka, Rawatsar, Sankhu, Pugal, Bai, Sidhmukh, Gopalpura, Sandwa, Jetpur, Chadwas, Ajitpura and other places made a representation that instead of carrying out a survey the amount of Rekh might be revised on the basis of the previous years' account books by a committee of five consisting of the nominees of the pattedars and the Maharaja. The proposals were accepted by the Maharaja and a committee appointed accordingly which went into the question and made its recommendations. These recommendations were accepted by the Maharaja and "Rekh Rakam" fixed for twenty-one years with full consent of the jagirdars.

When, however, Col. Bradford, the Agent to the Governor-General visited Bikaner in February, 1883, the four pattedars who were on this committee, represented to him that they had signed the recommendations under duress. The Agent brought this to the notice of the Maharaja who convinced him that the complaint was baseless. After the departure of Col.Bradford from Bikaner, the Maharaja sent for the complainants, but only one of them, the Thakur of Bhukarka came. The rest left for Deshnoke where other pattedars also joined them. From there they proceeded to Bidasar and refused to come to Bikaner. The Maharaja strove hard to bring these recalcitrant pattedars around but to no avail. Since the relations between the Maharaja and the jagirdars continued to deteriorate, Capt.Talbot was appointed to effect a rapprochement but even he failed to do so. On the contrary the jagirdars defied Capt. Talbot and finally took to open rebellion and garrisoned their forts and prepared for armed hostility. In order to suppress the hostilities of these jagirdars, the Maharaja decided, with the consent of Capt. Talbot, to march his armies against their strongholds.

The fortress of Mahajan surrendered after a siege of two months and likewise the fortress of Bidasar also surrendered; and the hostile jagirdars were taken into custody. But in order to obviate the possibility of Bidasar again becoming the stronghold of the miscreants the fortress of Bidasar was razed to the ground on the 8th January, 1884 by the British sappers and miners.

A precise yet graphic description of this event is given by Sir Walter Lawrence in his appreciation of Maharaja Ganga Singh, as under:-

> " Soon after this visit the barons went out and defied their ruler, and most reluctantly the Government of India decided to send a brigade to prevent war between the Maharaja and his rebellious barons. It was a strong brigade, but it was a difficult march to Bidasar, as the sand was deep and water was scarce. The guns of the Field artillery Battery - the last battery to use Persian horses - stuck in the sand and elephants dragged them slowly along. It was very cold at nights. At Bidasar the fortress of Bahadur Singh, one of the leading rebels, the outlaw barons and their followers were assembled, armed to teeth. The walls of the town bristled with guns of ancientry and I have never seen such a collection of antiques. But the strength of Bidasar lay in the high sand walls crowned by awkward thorns and the Brigadier General Gillespie, told me that it would be a difficult place to take by assault. Sir Edward Bradford thought rather of the desperate bravery of the Rajputs and dreaded that they would have recourse to 'Johur', when the Rajputs after burning their women, sally forth to die fighting. He was anxious and unhappy as the rebels refused to parley. So it was decided to attack Bidasar. But at midnight I was awakened in my tent by the four chief leaders of the rebels. They surrendered without condition. I rushed to Sir Edward Bradford's tent and told him the good news. Then General Gillespie was told and after some discussions, it was decided that the fort of Bidasar should be demolished and that the troops were to march back to Nasirabad. The four rebels chiefs were to be banished from the Bikaner State.
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> Next morning I saw a strange sight; the fort of Bidasar rose intact from the ground, and then

crumbled into dust and flames. The sappers and miners had done their work most thoroughly."[1]

There was a long standing boundary dispute between Jaipur and Bikaner in respect of Tamkor (in Jaipur), Hadial (in Bikaner) Khori (in Jaipur) and Mangaon (in Bikaner). The Political Agent mediated and the matter was settled to the satisfaction of both the States. Similarly the dispute about four bighas of land of Borkh village (in Hissar) and Mongana (in Bikaner) was settled at a meeting between the Extra Assistant Commissioner of Hissar and the Hakim of Rajgarh.

Soon after the rebellious jagirdars had been subdued, Capt. Talbot was appointed the permanent Political Agent in order to eradicate disorder and confusion, prevailing in the State and tone up the administration.[2] Even Lord Ripon had to address a Kharita[3] to Dungar Singh in 1883 regarding the mal-administration of the State, pointing out that "Bikaner cannot be preserved from disorder in the future unless Your Highness is aided in the administration of your territories, for a time at least, by the constant presence and support of a British officer." Lord Ripon went on to say that as he was very reluctant to interfere with the internal administration of an Indian State, Capt. Talbot, who was being appointed as the Resident Political Agent, would not be ordered to assume direct control of the Government but that His Highness should consult him freely, and be guided by his advice.

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1. Sohan Lal; Tawarikh Bikaner, pp.222-26
   Panikkar, His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, A Biography, pp. 390-91
   Mahakma Khas Jaipur file No: 150-"Punishment meted out by the Bikaner Darbar to the malcontent and disloyal jagirdars" pp.74-93.
   The author of this thesis rembers, as a little boy, speaking to Sir Walter Lawrence when he visited Bikaner in the year 1934 when he, as a very old man, described this incident to the author personally which has remained most vividly in his memory.
2. Col. R.C.Bradford's Kharitasdated 31.12.1883 and 1.9.1884
3. Lord Ripon's Kharita dated the 31st December, 1883-Appendix XIII.

The Maharaja himself was anxious to work for the welfare of his subjects as also to eradicate corruption and nepotism. Acting on the advice of Capt. Talbot, he appointed Amir Mohammad of Kutch as his Diwan and a number of other officials from outside the State to replace local men. His innate talent for rulership made him readily appreciate and adopt the modern methods of administration which were being brought into vogue, in the neighbouring British Indian territories. He created separate law courts to try judicial cases, and civil and criminal laws were codified. The police department was reorganised. The civil and criminal powers enjoyed by some of the jagirdars were withdrawn. The setting up of an Excise Department, framing of rules and regulations for its successful working and the opening of a post office, schools, and hospitals at several places were all an outcome of British initiative. The land settlement was brought into being in 1885 and the revision of the grades of the Government officials took place so that all sorts of corruption might be rooted out. A system of annual budgeting was also adopted. Electricity was introduced in the city of Bikaner in 1886. A dispensary was opened and became popular with the people. The administration was conducted by the council under the direct guidance of the Maharaja.

The British impact during the reign of Maharaja Dungar Singh reached its climax. This was primarily because the Maharaja was helpless against his rebellious thakurs and failed to curb them without British assistance. That explains the permanent posting of a Political Agent at Bikaner. Maharaja Dungar Singh adopted the policy of apprising the British Political Agent of all issues of importance concerning the State and was always open to reasonable advice received, though the Political Agent on his part carefully avoided taking any steps which might be construed to have any semblance of direct

interferencein the internal affairs of the State. The Political Agent reported to the Supreme Government that his dealings with the Maharaja had been most friendly and that he always found the Maharaja ready and willing to listen to his advice; and although it was his duty to point out to the Maharaja the irregularities of administration, the Maharaja never had occasion to complain of undue interference on his part and that the Political Agent was happy to observe that the Maharaja had frequently acknowledged the benefits derived from such advice. In consultation with Capt. Talbot, the Maharaja introduced quite a large number of administrative reforms, appointed Amir Mohammad of Kutch as his Diwan and imported talented people from outside after removing those local officials who were found undesirable.

By 1887, however, things seem to have again gone amiss and Lord Dufferin in his Kharita dated the 2nd February, 1887 once more drew the attention of the Maharaja that the affairs of the State "were not being conducted in accordance with the wishes of the Government of India" and that the Maharaja was "generally not disposed to follow the advice of the Political Agent in Bikaner." The Viceroy expressed in unequivocal terms that the object in writing to the Maharaja was "to earnestly caution" him "once more against a course of action which would end in results extremely distasteful to Your Highness." [1]

The period of the reign of Maharaja Dungar Singh characterised by the first attempts in modern administration marks the beginning of a new era which stands as a dividing line between the old regime and the new, which blossomed the reign of his successor, Maharaja Ganga Singh. Though the British respected the terms of the Treaty of 1818 with the Bikaner State, they at the same time took the opportunity offered by the action of the rebellious jagirdars to impose Resident Political Agent for the guidance of the Maharaja in

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1. Lord Dufferin's Kharita dated 2.2.1887 (in my possession) - Appendix XIV.

the internal administration of the State, contrary to the terms of the treaty, and made it clear that they considered the Indian States not as allies but as units which were bound to them in subordinate cooperation and whose destinies they could guide according to their will. This trend is apparent from the tenor of Lord Ripon's Kharita of the 31st December, and is further supported by the Kharita of 2nd February, 1887 from Lord Dufferin who made no pretensions in the matter and even went to the extent of bringing home to the Maharaja the consequences that might follow by his not following the advice of the Resident Political Agent.

Maharaja Dungar Singh, having no issue, had, during his lifetime, adopted his younger brother Ganga Singh who was born on the 3rd October, 1880 as his successor and heir. On his demise on the 19th August, 1887, Maharaja Ganga Singh succeeded to the gaddi at the age of seven, though according to the customs of the State, he was formally installed on the 31st August, 1887[1] as the twenty-first ruler of Bikaner[2] i.e. after the twelfth day ceremonies of the demise of the late Maharaja. The Political Department of the Government of India immediately set up a Council of Regency to carry on the day-to-day administration of the State.[3] Col. Thorton, the then Resident

1. Erskine, Gazetteer of Bikaner, p. 329
   Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, p.280
2. Ojha, Bikaner Rajya ka Itihas, Vol. II, p.492
   Succession recognised and confirmed by First Assistant Agent to the Governor-General vide Urgent Telegram No. 2426 G, dated Abu the 25th August, 1887; Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. nil, copies of papers relsting to succession.
   Sanction to succession was conveyed by Col. C.K.M.Walter, Agent to the Governor-General for Rajputana vide Kharita dated 16.9.1887 and Lord Dufferin's (Governor-General's) Kharita dated 21.10.1887, both in my possession.
3. Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, p.280
   Ojha, Bikaner Rajya ka Itihas, Vol. II, p.493
   Erskine, Gazetteer of Bikaner, p.329

Political Agent in Bikaner, was appointed the president of the Regency council with Amir Mohammad Khan, the Diwan, as the Vice President and Thakur Hari Singh of Sandwa, Thakur Jagmal Singh of Bai, Mehta Mangal Chand, Kaviraja Bhairondan and Munshi Sohan Lal as members.[1]

After 1858, a change is noticeable in the policy of the British towards the Indian States whose rulers were assured that their position would remain secure and their rights, dignity, and honour respected.[2] But this security was dearly bought, for the motive behind these guarantees was to make these Indian States serve as breakwaters in case any threat arose either from an external danger or from an internal revolt.[3] The treaties of friendship and alliance entered into about half a century earlier lost their force and they became subject to interpretation to be placed upon them by the Government of India. A most significant change that came about in the British policy towards the Indian States at this time was that of interference in the internal administration of the Indian States.[4] We shall presently review the extent to which this plicy

1. Ojha, Bikaner Rajya ka Itihas, Vol. II, p. 493
2. Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858. It promised:"We shall respect the rights, dignity and honour of Native Princes as our own."
3. Thompson; The Making of the Indian Princes, pp.273 and 286 Indian Reform Tract Series IV, Book No. 46110 (Bombay Unviersity Library).
   Sir Thompson Munro's Memorandum dated 12.8.1857 to Lord Hastings. It stated that security from domestic oppression and foreign invasion was dearly bought by the Indian Princes. They had to sacrifice their independence, national character and whatever renders a people respectable.
   It was Col. Sleeman's prediction that these Princes would one day act as breakwaters and this was fully justified by the events of 1857.
4. Thompson; The Making of the Indian Princes, p. 286-
   "By the strict letter of their treaties, then, the sense of grievance widely felt by the Princes today is justified. There has been all along abundant interference in internal affairs. The presence and authority of the Political officers are resented. One great Maharaja (probably Maharaja Ganga Singh) whose services had been Imperial as well as Indian, told me, he himself had had only one Resident whom he did not dislike.
   This does not mean that all interference has been unjustified even if not according to Treaty stipulations.....
   In the last hundred years there are numerous instances of

....contd. next page.

manifested itself in the relations of the British with the Bikaner State. But in order to understand the full impact of this policy and the reaction it had upon Maharaja Ganga Singh, it will be pertinent here to give a brief sketch of the Maharaja's education and training which made him what he was.

The early education of Maharaja Ganga Singh was conducted at Bikaner under the guidance of Pandit Ram Chandra Dubey of the Mayo College, Ajmer, and then at the Mayo College from 1889-94; later, under Sir Brian Egerton from 1895 to 1898 whose personality left a great impression upon the Maharaja. He also received military training at Deoli cantonment under the guidance of Lt. Col. J.D.Bell in 1897.[1] By scrupulous attention given by his tutors, the Maharaja imbibed what was good both in the east and the west; and developed traits of gentlemanliness and a sense of honour. He was a staunch fighter, where fight was necessary, for his rights and privileges, and an ardent patriot. How aptly did he once say!

> "..... We Indians should be foolish if we did not see much that was good in your political life in this country. And we would be still more foolish if after grasping the good points of your national life, we did not desire to have gratified or assimilated all that was good in your institutions or system, wherever and whenever our conditions permitted it."[2]

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major interference by the Paramount Power. One ruler of Baroda has been made to go, and one ruler of Indore also (another was coaxed or trapped into going). Alwar, Nabha and other States which in recent memory have had their rulers dismissed. The Paramount Power has come down heavily sometimes on barbaric punishment. ....."

1. Erskine, Gazetteer of Bikaner, p. 329
   Ojha, Bikaner Rajya ka Itihas, Vol. II, pp. 494, 495, 496 &500

2. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 24.4.1917 (para 11) at the Luncheon given by the Empire Parliamentary Association (United Kingdom Branch) to the Indian delegates in the House of Commons, Harcourt Room - Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No: 2278/XXVI, part II.B.

We have seen that the British adopted a policy of interference in the internal administration of the State from the reign of Maharaja Sardar Singh. This tendency gathered strength after the demise of Maharaja Dungar Singh, and the administration carried out by the Regency Council during the minority of Maharaja Ganga Singh had virtually degenerated into a British protectorate. It was during the period of the minority administration that the agreements between the British Government and the Bikaner State relating to the construction of a railway from Jodhpur to Bikaner (1889) and the minting of coins (1893) were entered into. From 1898, when the Maharaja attained majority and got full powers to 1908, he had virtually to carry on a crusade against this high handed policy of interference of the British whose political officers lost no chance of making an ostentatious demonstration of their power.

In connection with the Viceregal visit to Bikaner in September, 1899, Capt. Bayley, the then Political Agent stationed at Bikaner did not countenance the idea of the Maharaja making even casual suggestions with regard to the programme of the visit. He did not agree with the Maharaja in the matter of limiting the number of sardars to lunch and even went further to say that the number of retainers brought by the jagirdars formed the most picturesque feature of the show. Capt. Bayley even asked the Maharaja to post the sardars on both sides of the viceregal route from the station to his camp. What an irony of fate that the treaty of friendship and alliance entered into only some eighty years back was being completely ignored and the Political Agent went to the extent of dictating his wishes even in the matter of the Maharaja's programme of entertaining his guest.[1]

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 119/XV -Capt. S.F. Bayley's letter dated 12.9.1899 to Maharaja Ganga Singh.

Again while discussing famine relief measures, and on a suggestion being put forward for imposing export duty in the State, Capt. Bayley pointed out that it was not necessary with the Banias but that on the contrary it was desirable to keep the Banias in humour so that the trade could remain in desirable hands. He also informed the Maharaja that he was going to send him a petition received in this connection from the brother of one Arjandas. The Political Agent assured the Maharaja that he would outwardly back him against his subjects, but at the same time, it was his duty to safeguard the interests of the Maharaja's subjects.[1]

On the 13th December, 1899, Capt. Bayley wrote to the Maharaja informing him that he had received many petitions from the relatives of one Lekh Ram, a police employee of the Bikaner State who had been convicted to one year's imprisonment and a fine of Rs.50/- under section 330 of the Indian Penal Code, and called for a note on the case.[2] On the 14th December, 1899 the Political Agent again wrote to the Maharaja about the petition he had received from one Mool Chand Mali who had been undergoing imprisonment at the time and wanted the Maharaja to send a note on this case as well.[3] On the 18th December, 1899, the Maharaja was again reminded by the Political Agent for these notes.[4] The

1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 119/XV- Capt. S.F.Bayley's letter dated 12.9.1899 to Maharaja Ganga Singh.
2. Ibid, dated 13.12.1899.
   ✱ Lekh Ram was a Police Jemandar in the service of the Bikaner State. He was convicted under section 330 I.P.C. by the judge of the Appeal Court. The accused made a representation to Capt. Bayley before making an appeal to the Council in the normal course.
3. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.119/XV, Capt. Bayley's letter dated 14.12.1899 to Maharaja Ganga Singh.
   Mool Chand Mali was employed in the P.W.Department of the Bikaner State. He was charged of swindling Government money and was sentenced by the Judge of the Appeal Court.
4. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 119/XV, Capt. Bayley's letter dated 18.12.1899 to Maharaja Ganga Singh.

Maharaja did not like the way he was asked to send these notes and in his reply dated the 18th December, 1899, the Maharaja pointed out that though he did not mind personally the calling of such reports, he felt that if any one felt aggrieved, he could approach the higher authorities within the State for redress of grievances. By taking cognizance of such petitions and calling for reports the petitioners became emboldened to flout the authority of the Maharaja. The Maharaja reminded Capt. Bayley that his predecessor had always adopted the policy of forwarding such petitions to him for disposal.[1] But Capt. Bayley wrote back in his letter dated the 19th December, 1899 to say that it was the duty of the Political Agent to satisfy himself that the State to which he was accredited, was well and justly governed, or to know how it was governed. A Political Agent, he argued, who forwarded the petitions to the ruler for disposal and never tried to find out what the facts were, was not doing his work and earning his pay. He also added that if he were to disregard the petitions, the result would be that the petitioner would directly approach the Agent to the Governor-General and the Government of India. Then he would be asked to report on it, and he would have to make enquiries officially.[2] It is interesting to note that when the Maharaja referred the matter in a private letter to Col. Vincent, the then Agent to the Governor-General for Rajputana, he not only affirmed[3] that he was within his rights, but advised the Maharaja to withdraw his protest as he did not think it advisable for the Maharaja's letter to remain on record in the Agency files.

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 119/XV, ~~Capt~~. Maharaja Ganga Singh's letter dated 18.12.1899 to Capt. S.F.Bayley.
2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 119/XV- Capt. S.F.Bayley's letter dated 19.12.1899 to Maharaja Ganga Singh.
3. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 134/XV, p. 16 - Col. H.A.Vincent's letter dated 17.1.1900 to Maharaja Ganga Singh.

Another interesting incident, though of a trivial nature, which took place in January 1900 and brings out in bold relief the attitude of the Political Agents, may also be mentioned here. Capt. Bayley was proceeding on a tour of the Hanumangarh district and the Maharaja as a matter of courtesy sent him a shooting licence so that there might not be any unpleasant incident if he chose to shoot any game; shooting game in the State being restricted.[1] The Political Agent, however, took this as offensive and wrote in his letter dated the 29th January, 1900 that he was very much amused at the Maharaja's sending him a shooting licence and that he would have it framed and show it to his cousin and others as a specimen of the advanced government of Bikaner, where not even the Political Agent might shoot without a licence.[2]

We get a clearer picture of how far the British interference and bureaucratic arrogance went, when on the occasion of Maharaja Ganga Singh's investment with full powers on his 18th birthday in 1898, three important restirctions were imposed by the Political Department. Though these restrictions were meant to be secret, they were chafing a spirited ruler who could not brook interference.[3] From his eighteenth birthday upto his death in 1943, we see a long-drawn out fight the ruler made against British interference. As time went on, Maharaja Ganga Singh rose in stature and some of the instances of interference lessened, but his life was throughout a continued battle for preserving his own rights as well as of his brother princes against the encroachment by the British Government.

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.119/XV; Maharaja Ganga Singh's letter dated 24.1.1900 to Capt. S.F.Bayley.
2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 119/XV; Capt. S.F.Bayley's letter dated 29.1.1900 to Maharaja Ganga Singh.
3. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.37- Col. H.A.Vincent's letter dated 19.11.1998 to Maharaja Ganga Singh.

The three secret restrictions, which the Political Department imposed on him were:-

(1) that no measures or acts taken or done by the Council of Regency during the minority may be altered or reversed without the concurrence of the Political Officer accredited to the State;

(2)that the Political Officer's approval must be obtained before any important change is introduced in the administration; and

(3) that His Highness the Maharaja will not act against the Political Officer's advice in any important matter.[1]

The Maharaja had, however, been consistently fighting to establish his independent sovereignty and finally succeeded in the removal of these restrictions as late as in 1907, by his patience, perseverance and diplomacy and by his towering personality.[2]

This fight reached its climax in 1904-05 when the British tried to interfere in the orders of the Maharaja in respect of the cases of certain jagirdars who entered into a conspiracy against the State. Several Thakurs, specially Thakur Hukam Singh of Bidasar, Thakur Bhairun Singh of Ajitpura and Thakur Ram Singh of Gopalpura, had ever since 1900 been pressing claims which had already been disposed of during the

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 37 -Col. H.A. Vincent's letter dated 19.11.1898 to Maharaja Ganga Singh.

2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 37; Col. Dunlop Smith's letter dated 19.4.1907 to Maharaja Ganga Singh.
Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 37 -Col. W.Stewart's letter dated 6.5.1907 to Maharaja Ganga Singh.

Maharaja's minority and at the same time inciting disaffection among others.[1] All warnings were futile. On the contrary, on the

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1. The attitude of certain sardars from the very beginning had not been all that could have been desired, the sardars of Bidawat tract being specially conspicuous.

On the 24th February, 1900, seven Bidawat pattedars petitioned directly to the Agent to the Governor-General on certain points, one of which had been settled in the time of Maharaja Dungar Singh in 1885. These sardars sent Maharaja Ganga Singh similar petitions on the same date. The former petitions were sent to Maharaja Ganga Singh for disposal through the Political Agent. Maharaja Ganga Singh sent through the Nazim of Sujangarh for these sardars to come and represent their grievances before him. But inspite of repeated reminders they never came.

In May, 1900, Thakur Hukam Singh of Bidasar tendered a petition to Maharaja Ganga Singh enclosing a memo showing 36 points of grievances. These grievances included the grievances of other jagirdars also who had never protested against the orders of the State. There had also been some issues in which general public was concerned. Most of these points had already been disposed of either during the minority of Maharaja Ganga Singh or before his time. After careful consideration it was decided by the Maharaja not to allow this kind of procedure or to re-open the various points already settled. Maharaja Ganga Singh therefore, called Thakur Hukam Singh and pointed all this out to him and warned him in person against the championing of the cause of sardars and the public on matters which did not concern him. As regards other petty points he was instructed to represent them in a proper manner. Maharaja Ganga Singh also warned him against the attitude he had adopted towards the State. The people living in his thikana presented petitions to Maharaja Ganga Singh against him who was again warned and asked to conciliate them.

In 1901 a similar attempt, though on a smaller scale, was made by the sardars and Maharaja Ganga Singh had personally to warn the Thakurs of Ajitpura and Bidasar against carrying on such intrigues and instigations against the State. They were told quite clearly that such meetings and attempts to cause disaffection on their part laid them open to be charged with disloyalty to the State and of spreading dis-satisfaction against the State, the consequences of which were bound to be grave.

When things further deteriorated, Maharaja Ganga Singh gave a hint in his speech at his birthday banquet (1904) but even that did not deter them from persisting in the line of action they had adopted.

Rumours had reached the Maharaja from time to time

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occasion of the Maharaja's birthday in October 1904 when the

showing that a serious attempt was being made by certain sardars of the State to spread dissatisfaction among the others and to cause them to make groundless complaints against the State to the Government of India. The Maharaja did not take the matter in a serious light and took no notice of the occurrences at the time but the events which took place on the birthday of the Maharaja (1904) forced the matter on the Maharaja's attention. It then transpired from the reports made to Maharaja Ganga Singh by the Nazims of Reni and Sujangarh, from the Police Reports and other sources that on the occasion of the Tazimi sardars coming to Bikaner for the birthday celebrations, meetings were held at the houses of different sardars almost daily when their plan of action was discussed and that an effort was being made to incite as many sardars to join the clique as they could get. For instance from the police reports, it was found that the meetings were held at the following houses in spite of the warning conveyed by Maharaja Ganga Singh in his birthday banquet speech on the 23rd October, 1904:-

1. 24th October, about 9.00 p.m. at Bidasar Dera.
2. 25th October evening at Ajitpura Dera.
3. 26th October evening about 7.00 p.m. at Sandwa dera.
4. 27th October evening at Bidasar Dera. On this date it was reported by the police that some complaints were drafted when some city people were also present and that an attempt was made to instigate them also.
5. 28th October evening at Bidasar Dera.
6. 29th October about 9.30 a.m. at Sandwa Dera.
7. 29th October about 5.30 p.m. at Sandwa Dera.

Activities of this type had been going on for a long time and the Maharaja found himself compelled, after several years patient toleration, to take notice of the undesirable actions and behaviour of pattedars who were eventually proved to be among the ringleaders of the seditious and disloyal propaganda against the State.

Mahakma Khas Jaipur file No. 150 Conf. in the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner- "Punishment meted out by the Bikaner Darbar to the malcontent and disloyal jagirdars"- Maharaja Ganga Singh's minute dated 3.11.1904.

Tazimi sardars had, according to custom, assembled in Bikaner to pay homage to the ruler, it was reported to the Maharaja that these jagirdars were regularly holding meetings in an effort to bring into their fold as many of their class as possible.[1] Taking the cue, the Maharaja in his speech on the 23rd October, 1904 gave a warning to the sardars against intrigues, advising them that if they had any genuine grievances proper representations should be made and they would receive due consideration.[2] But instead of heeding this advice and taking advantage of the opportunity offered, the jagirdars continued to hold meetings and made continuous efforts to

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1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's minute dated 3.11.1904; Mahakma Khas Jaipur file No: 150 Conf. in the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner -"Punishment meted out by the Bikaner Darbar to the malcontent and disloyal jagirdars".
   Meetings were reported to have been held on the dates, time and places as mentioned in foot-note 1 on page227, item 1 to 7.

2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2278/XXVI, part I -Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 23.10.1904 at the Dussehra Darbar -
   " ..... On an occasion like the present (Birthday rejoicing) I feel very loath to touch on a topic like this, but I am of opinion that it would be unwise were no notice taken of a matter which has been going on for the last three or four years and I think the time has now come when this state of affairs would be exposed.
   I have observed that each year when the sardars come in from the districts for my birthday celebrations a strong attempt is made by a few of them (who shall be nameless) to instigate a large number of other sardars to start an opposition to the State. I am glad to see that these attempts have not been successful, but I mention this as a warning lest such sardars may, through their ignorance be drawn into the clique and thus cast a stain on the time-honoured loyalty of their families, while they would do absolutely no good to themselves, for I challenge any one were to prove, to the satisfaction of all present, that they could in the end gain anything by going against the State."

create disaffection.[1] On reliable reports of these activities reaching the Maharaja, he immediately ordered on the 29th October, 1904 for a summary enquiry being instituted. On the 4th November, 1904 he set up a commission consisting of three jagirdars and two State officials to go into the allegations that these jagirdars had attempted to create widespread disaffection against the State and had not only conspired to that end but were also instigating others to join them.[2] After

1. Please see foot-note No. 1 on page

2. Western Rajputana States Residency file No. 119(1905-08), Thakurs conspiracy case against their Darbar, page 41 -

"ORDER"

" The Darbar having been informed through various sources of some attempts having been made by certain sardars to cause widespread dissatisfaction in the State and to instigate people to join them in complaining against the State without any real ground, His Highness the Maharaja has been pleased to appoint a Commission consisting of one Rajvi, two Tazimi sardars and two State officials to enquire into the matter and to submit their report as early as possible to His Highness for orders.

His Highness feels sure that the Commission will deal with the case justly and carefully.

The Commission to consist of -

President:- Maharaj Bhairun Singh;
Sardars :- (1) Thakur Hari Singh of Mahajan; and
(2) Thakur Kahn Singh of Bhukarka.
Officials:- (1) Munshi Fateh Singh, Revenue Minister; &
(2) Munshi Laljimal, Nazim Suratgarh.

It should hold its meetings as soon as all the members are present in Bikaner, at the Ganga Niwas Darbar Hall.

Ganga Singh
Maharaja,Major,Aide-de-Camp.
Bhairun Singh,
Raghuvar Singh,
Hari Singh,
Jeoraj Singh,
Bahadur Singh
R.D.Cooper."

Lallgarh,
The 4th November, 1904.

recording evidence and studying it minutely the Commission recorded its findings, namely, that the three Thakurs of Bidasar, Ajitpura and Gopalpura were guilty of acts, constituting offence under section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code and that though there were eight other persons besides who were guilty of conspiracy, no findings against them were recorded as they had not been formally charged.[1]

The motives of these three jagirdars in conspiring against the State were not far to seek. In the case of Thakur Hukam Singh of Bidasar, we have already seen in the previous chapter that his father Bahadur Singh was the ringleader of the rebellion of 1883-84 and had been punished[2]. Hukam Singh had also been ordered to refund to the State a sum of Rs.7640/- realised in excess by him illegally in respect of cesses.[3]

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1. According to the findings of the Commission the Thakurs of Bidasar, Ajitpura and Gopalpura were guilty of holding seditious meetings in Bikaner at their houses and other places, and of instigating other pattedars as also the city people to join them in this disloyal movement. In addition the following charges were also found proved by the Commission against -
   (1) The Thakur of Ajitpura:- (i) Attempting to spread disaffection when he was in Ajitpura itself; (ii) to hold a conspiracy against the State at Raisalana; (iii) deputing Rawat Singh Kandhal of Dungrana for spreading disaffection among pattedars and the common people in various parts of the State; and (iv) attempting to hold a seditious meeting at Reni.
   (2) The Thakur of Bidasar: - Attempting to cause disaffection in Bidasar itself.
2. Western Rajputana States Residency file No: 119(1905-1908), p. 5; letter No: 183 dated 8.6.1905 of Hon. Mr. E.G.Colvin officiating Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana, to the Secretary to Government of India in the Foreign Department.
3. Ibid.

Likewise Thakur Bhairun Singh of Ajitpura had also been punished for his complicity in the rebellion of 1883-84 and besides his demand for the grant of certain civil and criminal powers had been rejected in 1889. On complaints of the British police, he had been bound down for good behaviour in 1896, and rebuked in 1903 for not having observed the customary practice and courtesy of coming to meet the Maharaja when he visited his patta.[1] The Thakur of Gopalpura nursed a grievance because he had been ordered to remove a bund which he had unauthorisedly built in his patta.[2] The Commission recommended terms of imprisonment and fines for each of the accused[3] and added that in the event of its being decided to punish them administratively, whatever punishment appeared suitable, might be awarded. The Council also was consulted independently by the Maharaja as to the punishments to be awarded to these Thakurs and it recommended terms of imprisonment and fines in the case of all the three accused. The Council was further of the opinion that in view of the gravity of the offences, exemplary administrative punishment was called for and that the jagirdars were liable to confiscation of their jagirs.[4] The

1. Western Rajputana States Residency file No: 119(1905-1908) p. 5; letter No: 183 dated 8.6.1905 of Hon. Mr. E.G.Colvin, officiating Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana, to the Secretary to Government of India in the Foreign Department.

2. Ibid, p. 6

3. Ibid, p. 32. The Commission proposed the following punishments:-
   (1) For Thakur Ram Singh of Gopalpura:- Seven years' simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs.7000/-.
   (2) For Thakur Hukam Singh of Bidasar and Thakur Bhairun Singh of Ajitpura:- Ten years simple imprisonment and a fine of Rs.10,000/- each.

   Adding that in the event of its being decided to punish them administratively, whatever punishment appears suitable may be awarded.

4. Western Rajputana States Residency file No.119(1905-1908), pp. 32-33 -
   The Council recommended the following punishments:-
   (1) Thakur Hukam Singh of Bidasar:- (i) Seven years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs.500/- or administratively, confiscation of village Momasar of the patta,

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Council found that the present conspiracy was the result of the leniency shown in the past.

As soon as these recommendations were received, the Maharaja summoned a Darbar (on the 2nd January, 1905) to which Major Stratton, the Political Agent was also invited. The report of the Commission was read out to the accused who stood charged with sedition and disloyalty. The Maharaja, while agreeing with the findings of the Commission and the Council, decided on awarding administrative punishments only, and even there, the recommendations of the Council were tempered with leniency.[1]

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permanently. (ii) Deposition of Thakur Hukam Singh. (iii) Placing of Thakur Hukam Singh under survellience till he is reformed. (iv) Granting of the Bidasar, except village Momasar, to his eldest son when he comes of age.

(2) Thakur Bhairun Singh of Ajitpura:- (i) Seven years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs.500/- or administratively, confiscation permanently of his whole jagir. (ii) Keeping him under survellience for life.

(3) Thakur Ram Singh of Gopalpura:- (i) Five years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs.3000/- or administratively, confiscation permanently of one village of his patta.(ii) Deposition of Thakur Ram Singh. (iii)Grant of the patta, except the confiscated village, to his eldest son when he comes of age. (iv) Placing him under survellience for five years.

1. Western Rajputana States Residency file No.119(1905-1908),p.34- The punishments awarded were as under:-

(1) To Thakur Hukam Singh of Bidasar:- (i) Confiscation permanently of village Momasar. (ii) Resumption of the patta, except village Momasar to court of ward after three years till such time as it was decided whether to restore it to Thakur Hukam Singh or his heir.(iii) Resumption of the entire patta for three years. (iv) Thakur Hukam Singh being kept under survellience for five years. (v) Ranking Bidasar below Rawatsar.

(2) To Thakur Bhairun Singh of Ajitpura:- (i) Deposition of Thakur Bhairun Singh. (ii) Thakur Bhairun Singh being kept under survellience awaiting the Maharaja's pleasure. (iii) Confiscating permanently villages bringing a revenue equal to half that of the total patta villages.(iv)Thakur Bhairun Singh's eldest son being appointed pattedar of the unresumed portion of the patta which to be placed under court of wards till he came of age. (v) Patta of Ajitpura to be demoted from 3rd to 4th class of Tazims.

(3) To Thakur Ram Singh of Gopalpura:- (i) Confiscation

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Major Stratton, and the Agent to the Governor-General, Sir Arthur Martindale, were kept fully informed of the case and they concurred with the Maharaja in the findings and the punishments awarded.[1] However, the accused sent representations to the Foreign Department and the Governor-General, Lord Curzon,

permanently of the village Sulkhania from the patta lands. (ii) Thakur Ram Singh being placed under survellience for two years. (iii) The unresumed patta remaining under the court of wards till Thakur Ram Singh satisfied the State that he had reformed himself or his son came of age.

1. Western Rajputana States Residency file No. 119(1905-1908) p/o. 3#, letter No: 183 dated 8.6.1905 from Mr. E.G.Colvin, officiating Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana, to the Secretary to Government of India, Foreign Department.

The first distinct information of the trouble was conveyed by the Maharaja to Sir Arthur Martindale (Agent to Governor-General) in the form of a memorandum which was forwarded to him by the Political Agent on the 9th November, 1904 and afterwards supplemented by unofficial communications.

When Sir Arthur Martindale visited Bikaner during the middle of January, 1905, he and Major Stratton (the Political Agent) discussed the matter in detail with the Maharaja and on the 18th January, 1905, Sir Arthur Martindale recorded a note saying that he had come to the conclusion that the action taken by the Maharaja was fully warranted and that the fact of the agitation appeared to have been conclusively proved before the Commission.

In para 8 of the afore-referred to letter Mr. Colvin analyses the points setforth in the memorial of the petitioners (the accused Thakurs) which was forwarded to him by Major Bruce (Political Agent) on the 17th May, 1905 with his memorandum as also the memorandum of his predecessor Major Stratton and a note of the Maharaja and records (in para 10) his concurrence with the views of Sir Arthur Martindale (as noted above). He goes on to recommend that the Government of India might inform the memorialists that they decline to interere in the case.

who called for the report of the Agent to the Governor-General and inspite of Agent's endorsing the action of Maharaja Ganga Singh, his orders were directed to be modified under a letter from the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department No. 3643-I.A, dated Simla the 7th September, 1905.[1] The modification was amended by letter No: 4788-I.A, dated 20.11.1905.[2] However, as the punishments awarded had been

1. Western Rajputana States Residency file No.119(1905-1908), p. 76; letter No: 3643 dated 7. 9.1905 from the Secretary to Government of India in the Foreign Department to Mr. E.G.Colvin, Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana:-
   "..... The Government of India are anxious so to proceed as not to appear to weaken the authority of His Highness the Maharaja, particularly in view of the fact that the action which he has taken seems to have been adopted, if not on the advice, at least with the concurrence of the Political Agent accredited to his State. They are prepared therefore, to let the expression of their opinion take the form of advice, and I am to request that, while informing the petitioners that their memorial is rejected, you will advice the Maharaja simultaneously to publish a notification that in exercise of his clemency, he has been pleased to reduce the sentence so far as the permanent confiscation of lands is concerned and to revise it in any other respects which you may regard as suitable."

2. Western Rajputana States Residency file No.119(1905-1908), letter No. 4778.I.A, dated 20.11.1905 from the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department to the Hon. Mr. E.G.Colvin, Agent to Governor-General in Rajputana.
   While suggesting the following modifications for the consideration of the Maharaja, the Secretary to the Govt of India in the Foreign Department added that he was desired to express the very strongest hope that the Maharaja would exercise his personal clemancy towards the Thakurs, not in any indefinite way, but in the manner which the Government of India only refrained with the utmost difficulty from introducing into their orders of the 7th September, 1905:-
   (1) In the case of Thakur Bhairun Singh, the punishment of confiscation may be allowed to stand although it would be for His Highness to consider, in the light of the Thakur's future behaviour, whether so much as half of his estates should be resumed.
   (2) The culpability of Thakur Hukam Singh is less grave and the sentence of the confiscation of the village Momasar might be remitted at the expiry of the period of three years.
   (3) In the case of Thakur Ram Singh, the confiscation of the village of Sulkhania is clearly a punishment in excess of his present offence and the sentence might be remitted after a period of one year and the village directed to be placed under the court of wards like the rest of the patta.

announced by the Maharaja in an open Darbar and as any modification would affect his prestige adversely, and would also encourage any mischief-mongers by the belief that the ruler was not supported by the Paramount Power, the Maharaja desired to make a personal representation to the Governor-General. This request was recommended by the Acting Agent to the Governor-General, Mr. E.G.Colvin, and the Governor-General consented to consider a written representation on the subject, which was made under the Maharaja's letter of the 30th November, 1907. Finally the Government of India concurred with the Maharaja's original orders under a letter from the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, No. 1086.I.A, dated the 11th March, 1908.[1]

The British interference in internal administration had become so marked that even in the matter of granting permission to jagirdars to leave the State, a reference had to be made to the Political Agent as is seen from the case of Thakur Megh Singh who had requested for permission to leave the State. The Thakur wanted to leave the State to enable him to print certain objectionable pamphlets and distribute them throughout India and abroad. The Maharaja had to bring this fact to the notice of the Political Agent and in his letter dated the 15th December, 1899, he pointed out the facts of the case to the

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1. Western Rajputana States Residency file No: 119(1905-1908), p.111; letter No. 1086.I.A dated 11.3.1908 from R.E.Holland, Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department to Mr. E.G.Colvin, Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana -

"After careful consideration of the circumstances explained by His Highness and the Political Agent, the Government of India are pleased to accept your recommendation that His Highness the Maharaja should be permitted (a) to carry out his original orders for the absolute confiscation of the village of Momasar in the Bidasar patta; and (b) to banish Bahadur Singh, ex-Thakur of Bidasar from Bikaner.

Political Agent adding that he was not afraid of the plans of the Thakur and was prepared to accord the necessary permission to Thakur Megh Singh. But in a similar case of Thakur Bhairun Singh, permission was not considered desirable as certain cases against him were then pending enquiry. The Political Agent, in his letter dated 16.12.1899 agreed that Thakur Megh Singh be granted permission to leave the State.[1]

In what was known as the Mianwali Dacoity case, Naraina and Khazan Singh were sentenced to death by the judicial courts but on appeal the Council remitted the sentence of Khazan Singh to that of life imprisonment. Capt. Bayley the Political Agent called for the file of the case and recommended that the sentence passed by the judge should be confirmed.[2] In his letter dated the 21st May, 1900[3] Col. Vincent also said that he thought that the opinion expressed by Capt. Bayley should have been acted upon.

From the above events, it becomes clear that inspite of the Royal Proclamations and various assurances given to the rulers according to which the engagements and treaties, etc., made with the Indian Princes were promised to be scrupulously carried out, the same were being broken on various pretexts and occasions. The assurances of the British that their rights, privileges and dignities would be unimpaired and were guaranteed, were gradually receding into background.

For an independent minded and spirited young prince at the helm of affairs in Bikaner, a natural desire to fight against

1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 199/XV; Maharaja Ganga Singh's letter dated 15.12.1899 to Capt. S.F.Bayley and Capt. Bayley's reply dated the /6th December, 1899.
2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 134/XV, p.23 -Capt. S.F.Bayley's letter dated 4.5.1900.
3. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 134/XV, .p. 25 - Col. H.A.Vincent's letter dated 21.5.1900.

such interventions was understandable. Coming from the fighting clan of the great Rathores, it was a matter of no surprise that these pin-pricks in the shape of interference from the Central Power in the day-to-day administration of the State had become unbearable to him. His reaction to this policy of intervention is manifest from the very beginning. As early as in December, 1899 in connection with the sarcastic letter of Capt. Bayley regarding the sending to him of a shooting licence, the Maharaja wrote back[1] asking if the Bundi political Agent would go and shoot Bundi tigers without permission of the Maharaja.

Even in the matter of introducing reforms for a better, efficient and speedy administration the Maharaja had no full freedom. In 1899 when he intended making certain changes in the set up, namely, that of appointing secretaries instead of the State Council and wrote to Sir Arthur Martindale, the then Agent to the Governor-General, he was advised to 'go slow' and not to be precipitate in introducing reforms or making changes and, above all, in changing officers.[2] However, to a person of Maharaja Ganga Singh's zeal, energy and courage, such go-slow advice was not welcome. Maharaja Ganga Singh continued to strive for greater advancement of his people and in 1903 eventually succeeded in having the Government of India concede to the carrying out of the new scheme prepared by him for the advancement of his people. Though the Maharaja's letter dated 31.7.1903 addressed to Sir Arthur Martindale is not available, on the file, Sir Arthur's reply dated 3.8.1903 is available in which he has complimented the Maharaja for his being able to secure the ready acquiscence of the Government of India to his proposals.[3]

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 119/XV, p.81-Maharaja Ganga Singh's letter dated 2.2.1900.
2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No:86-102/XV, p.2; Arthur Martindale's letter dated 21.8.1899
3. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 86-102/XV, p. 43; Sir Arthur Martindale's letter dated 3.8.1903.

The British Government not only interfered in the internal affairs of the States but also took advantage of the rulers' supposedly subordinate status for augmenting the British revenue. The British attitude towards Indian States in fact had been shaped by their intention to exploit the resources of these already backward areas. The manner in which the British started setting up telegraph lines in the Indian States showed their intention to earn more income at the expense of the States. Before agreeing to open a new telegraph office within the territory of an Indian State, the Telegraph Department generally asked for a financial guarantee from the State and stipulated an undertaking that the State would assure them an income of Rs.1500/- per annum or indemnify them against any loss due to inadequate receipts and excess of working charges at the new office. The Telegraph department was not prepared to accept a corresponding obligation to make over to the State the balance of excess profits remaining after meeting all the expenses. They were averse to leaving any source untouched and did not approve of a railway telegraph office being worked by the State, which owned the railway, for the general or public traffic in telegrams as well. This policy of the British Government was clearly manifested in their relationship with the State of Bikaner.[1]

Before 1904 the Bikaner State, together with the Jodhpur State, maintained its own railway telegraph offices which also handled a large amount of public traffic. However, owing to there being no link between the railway telegraph offices and the Government telegraph offices, the telegraph traffic was considerably delayed causing much inconvenience to the public. In order to avoid this inconvenience to the public, the Bikaner and Jodhpur States requested the British that their railway telegraph lines be linked with the Government telegraph office at Phulera but this request was refused. On the other

1. A Scheme of Arrangement, Vol. IV, book No. 549, p.2154(i)

hand the Government claimed the right to open a combined telegraph office at the railway station of Jodhpur and Bikaner and thus appropriate all the telegraph revenues of the two States. The States withstood the demand for some time and asked for the opening of a Government telegraph office at Marwar junction, the necessity for which was felt on account of the Sindh traffic. In the reply received from the Director General, Telegraphs, in his letter dated the 11th March, 1904, he said that the Government telegraph office at Marwar junction, had been opened mainly for purposes of observation and testing the wires from Bombay and Calcutta to Karachi and that the staff and accommodation there were inadequate to meet any such extra demand. He pointed out that the telegraph office at Marwar Junction did not offer any promises and therefore asked the States to contribute towards any additional expenditure that the direct connection might involve. He also insisted on the withdrawal of the embargo that had been imposed by the States for the opening of combined telegraph offices in their territories. He added that, "particularly in the case of a State like Marwar with its advanced and enlightened community having interests in every corner of India, and where remunerative expenditure on telegraphs with adequate ends and proportionate results could readily be suggested," the subject was to be treated as a financial whole.[1]

In the interests of the State subjects there was no way out but to acquiesce in the cupidity of the British Indian Telegraph department and the Maharaja of Jodhpur replied agreeing to fully carry out the wishes of the Government of India but claimed a compensation of Rs.19,390/- per annum. The Bikaner State, acting on the advice of the Bikaner-Jodhpur railway Manager, claimed a compensation of Rs.14000/- per annum, but the claims were rejected in 1905.[2] While rejecting these

1. Scheme of Arrangement, Vol. IV, book No.549, p.2154 (i)
2. Ibid, p. 2154 (ii).

claims, the Government of India said that it was the well-recognised practice of the Government to extend their telegraph systems to Indian States whenever required by Imperial needs, and neither the agreement of 1889 nor the privileges which they had enjoyed of transmitting public messages by their railway wires entitled them to any preferential treatment different from that extended to other rulers. Ultimately in 1907 the Government of India purchased the one State Telegraph line for Rs.32,708/- calculated at the rate of Rs.375/- per mile of the wire.[1] But Maharaja Ganga Singh was not a person to allow this state of affairs to gather strength or even to continue. He believed that the evil should be nipped in the bud. He fought against the policy of highhandedness from the very beginning and used all the resources at his disposal, including the goodwill of those officers who understood him correctly, to overcome the evil. Out of the numerous instances only one is being cited here to illustrate the point.

Ever after the shooting licence incident already referred to, the Maharaja adopted an attitude of indifference towards Capt. Bayley, the Political Agent, which is very clear from Capt. Bayley's letter dated the 8th February, 1900 to the Maharaja wherein he said that "ever since you came back from Abu after X'mas your attitude to me and Mrs. Bayley has not been very kind and friendly..... shortly before X'mas I had the bad luck to vex you by asking questions about some petitions and though you wrote that you understood my explanations .... after X'mas your whole attitude has said plainer than words that the Europeans at Bikaner..... are my friends except the Bayleys."[2]

That Maharaja Ganga Singh was successful in his attempts to put a stop to British interference in the internal administration of his State was due not less to his policy of adhering

1. Scheme of Arrangement, Vol. IV, book No.549, p.2154(ii)
2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 119/XV, p.82; Capt.S.F.Bayley's letter dated 6.2.1900.

to the pledged words of the Treaty entered into by his ancestors than to his readiness to help the British Crown whenever need arose, thereby proving without doubt that they had nothing to fear from him. He showed strength of character and statesmanship in his relations with not only the Government of India but also the administration of his State.

In 1895 when war was declared between the British and Chitral and again in 1896 when war broke out in Sudan, Maharaja Ganga Singh offered[1] his personal services but they were gratefully declined in view of the Maharaja's tender age, who was only fifteen at the time and the fact that the wars in question were of no serious magnitude.[2] In 1899 again the Maharaja offered[3] his services for the Boer war but the Government did not consider it desirable for him to participate in person.[4]

In 1900 the Maharaja offered the services of Ganga Risala as also his personal services for the China War.[5] On the 10th August, 1900 the Maharaja received intimation from Resident Political Agent that his offer had been gratefully accepted by the Queen Empress.[6] The regiment with the Maharaja in Chief Command embarked on the 1st September, 1900 and arrived at Hongkong on the 14th September, and disembarked on the 17th September, 1900.[7] The Maharaja and the regiment took active part

1. Beatson, A History of the Imperial Service Troops of Native States, p.21.
2. Ibid.
3. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 119/XV -Maharaja Ganga Singh's letter dated 26.11.1899 to Capt. S.F.Bayley.
4. Ibid, Capt. S.F.Bayley's letter dated 5.1.1900 to Maharaja Ganga Singh. Capt. Bayley says -"Sir W.Cunningham concluded by hoping that your disappointment might be alleviated by the knowledge that at a period of serious scarcity and distress such as that now prevailing in Rajputana, a chief is in reality able to render more valuable services to the Crown by superintending the interests of his own State and people than he would be able to do even by personal service in the field against the enemies of the Queen."
5. Beatson, Op.cit. p. 21.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

in various battles including the siege of Potingfu and the victory of Pitang.[1] On the signing of peace treaty, the Maharaja returned to India in December, 1900 and was accorded a public welcome at Calcutta on behalf of the Government of India.[2] The services of the regiment were mentioned in Brigade Orders dated Calcutta the 21st June, 1901 as below:-

> "In bidding farewell to the Bikaner regiment the Brigadier General Commanding desires to give expression to his unqualified appreciation of the excellent service rendered by the Regiment during its seven months tour of service in North China.
>
> The conduct, discipline, soldierly bearing and health of the Regiment have also been most satisfactory throughout."[3]

It was in recognition of these distinguished services that the King Emperor of India permitted the distinction of"China 1900" being borne upon its colours.[4] The Maharaja was the only Indian prince to visit the theatre of war, was awarded the China Medal by the King personally in June 1902 when he had gone to England to attend the coronation of the King Edward VII.

In 1902 the Maharaja offered the services of the Ganga Risala (Bikaner Camel Corps) for the Somaliland campaign as also his personal services.[5] The Government accepted the services of the regiment, Lord Curzon did not agree to the Maharaja's going out to the war front.[6] The regiment left Bikaner on the 4th November 1902 and returned on the 14th July, 1904. During its service in Somaliland, the regiment distinguished itself in the battles of Jidbali and Dharatol and its services were highly appreciated by Sir Charles Egerton, General Officer Commanding the Somaliland field force.[7]

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1. Ojha, Bikaner Rajya ka Itihas, Vol. II, p.508
2. Ibid.
3. Brigade Orders dated Calcutta the 21st June, 1901 by Major General J.T. Cummins D.S.O. Commanding the 4th Infantry Brigade, China Expeditionary force.
4. The House of Bikaner, pp.173-74
4. Beatson, Op.cit, p.153
5. The House of Bikaner, p.45
6. Ibid, pp. 45 and 174
7. Ibid, p. 174

As a result of all these distinguished services of the Bikaner State and the Maharaja personally to the country and the empire coupled with his contact with the various Viceroys and the imperial royal family during either their visits to Bikaner or his visits to Delhi and England, the Maharaja grew in stature and estimation which helped him considerably in fighting intervention and the abolition of the post of Political Agent at Sujangarh in 1910, Bikaner being placed in charge of the Resident, Western Rajputana States, and ultimately in 1919 establishing direct relations with the Agent to the Governor-General,[1] Bikaner being the only State to have such direct relations.

In 1902 the Maharaja was invited to London to attend the coronation of Edward VII and reached London on the 15th June, 1902. On this occasion he was awarded the Coronation Medal and also appointed A.D.C. to the Prince of Wales, later King George V. After some time of his return to India, he attended the coronation Darbar in Delhi on the 1st January, 1913. He was created a K.C.I.E., in June 1904 on the birthday of Edward VII.[2]

Since difficulty was being experienced in administering the three villages, namely, Karanpura, Padampura and Kesrisinghpura in the Deccan, far away from the State territories, the Maharaja handed them over to the Government of India in 1905 and got in exchange the villages of Bawarlvas and Rattakhera and a sum of rupees twenty-five thousand in cash.

In November 1905, the Prince of Wales (later King George the V) and Princess Marry visited Bikaner and on leaving, wrote to the Maharaja expressing that the friendship between them and the Maharaja had been so firmly cemented.[3]

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1. Col. A.D.Macpherson's (Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana) letter No.1308-1309, dated 26.3.1919,Appendix XV.
2. A complete list of medals and titles of the Maharaja is given in Appendix XX.
3. George P, letter dated 27.11.1905 -
   "I can assure you that among the happy recollections that the Princess and I will carry away from India, none will be more cherished than those of our most enjoyable stay at Bikaner, and of the friendship between you and ourselves which has been so firmly cemented."

The Maharaja was created a G.C.S.I., on the 1st January, 1907 and in 1909 he was made an Hon. Lieutenant Colonel of the Second Lancers. Shortly after the accession of King George V, the Maharaja was appointed Hon. Colonel and A.D.C. to the King in June 1910 on the King's birthday. In 1911 the Maharaja was invited to attend the coronation in England. He left for England on the 6th May, 1910 and was accompanied by Maharajkumar Sadul Singh. During the visit, the degree of LL.D., was conferred upon the Maharaja by the Cambridge University. Later, the Maharaja was closely associated with the arrangements for the coronation Darbar in Delhi in 1911, having been nominated by Lord Hardinge as a member of Darbar Committee. The Maharaja was present at the reception of Their Majesties on the 7th December, 1911 and he also paid a call on Their Majesties' representative. During the Darbar held on the 12th December, 1911 the Maharaja was invested with the G.C.S.I. by the King. On this occasion Maharajkumar Sadul Singh served as a page to the King.

In 1913, the Salt Agreement entered into in 1879 was cancelled and a new one was entered into which was ratified on the 24th July, 1913.[1]

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1. Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp. 301-02.

CHAPTER VIII

Maharaja Ganga Singh's role in British Indian and Imperial Politics

The minority and the early period of Maharaja Ganga Singh's reign described in the previous chapter, was a period of trial, faced as he was with increasing interference by the Paramount Power and anarchy and lawlessness within the State. But circumstances had changed by the end of the nineteenth century, and he could launch his great scheme for the modernisation of the administration of the State. At the beginning of the twentieth century he had proved his merits as a soldier during the China war and the Somaliland campaign. The British Government began to show a more friendly attitude towards the Maharaja, and cordial relations were established between the Central authorities and the Bikaner ruler. The Maharaja now, more experienced than before, introduced major political and administrative reforms without external interference. He showed his talents as a first-rate soldier and statesman and proved himself a great Indian patriot and a faithful ally of the British Government. The later part of his reign constitutes perhaps the most important period in the history of Bikaner when its ruler was called upon to play a leading part in national and imperial politics. Thanks to Ganga Singh, Bikaner became famous.

Immediately on the outbreak of World War I, the Maharaja was the first[1] ruling prince of India to send a telegram on 3rd August, 1914 to the King Emperor[2] and also to the Viceroy of India[3] placing his personal services and sword as well as the gallant troops of the Bikaner State at the command of the King Emperor for the safety, honour and protection of the empire. The King in his cablegram of the 4th August, 1914 thanked the

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1. Viceroy's Kharita as referred to in "A Brief statement of Bikaner&s War Services in the Great War", p.18
2. Appendix XVI.
3. Appendix XVII.

Maharaja for the offer and added that no decision had till then been taken regarding military operations but that the Maharaja's offer of help would be kept in mind.[1] The Viceroy also telegraphed[2] on the 4th August, 1914 thanking the Maharaja in glowing terms in the name of the King Emperor for the generous offer of personal services and those of his State troops, to help the war effort and win the war. The Viceroy said he knew that he could count upon the Maharaja and his gallant troops. The commander-in-chief in India on the 6th August, 1914 telegraphed[3] the Maharaja informing him that his loyal and most welcome offer would never be forgotten and felt certain if ever an opportunity arose, the Army would welcome the help of the Maharaja and his gallant troops.

The Ganga Risala was destined to play a prominent role in the war; famous as this regiment had become owing to its long history of twenty years.[4] It arrived at Suez in October, 1914. There was considerable demand for the Ganga Risala because the terrain around Suez was particularly suitable for the deployment of the camel corps. Being the only camel corps in Egypt, during the four and a half years of the war, this famous regiment was relied upon for carrying out patrol and reconnaisance duties

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1. Appendix XVIII
2. Appendix XIX
3. A Brief statement of Bikaner's War Services in the Great War, p. 18.
4. The unit was raised during the minority of Maharaja Ganga Singh during the time the affairs of the State were being looked after by the Regency Council. Lord Elgin's Kharita dated 23.5.1894 compliments the Maharaja saying " Your Highness may now be proud of possessing a most valuable camel corps. The camel corps is the only one of its kind in India..." The Ganga Risala developed into its present organised modern form during the earlier period of Maharaja Ganga Singh's reign. There is no doubt camel corps had been used for fighting purposes for centuries earlier; Bikaner being the land of camels and the terrain being most suitable for their deployment.

east of Suez canal. It was only on the 20th November, 1914 that the Ganga Risala for the first time encountered the enemy at Bir-el-Nuss. General Sir John Maxwell, General officer Commanding in Egypt expressed in not uncertain terms his views when he wrote to the Maharaja in January, 1915 that the corps of Bikaner were most useful and that without them he could not have done much.

During the advance of the Turkish army under Kemal Pasha in January and February, 1915, the Bikaner Ganga Risala was in continuous touch with the enemy, and during the final attack on the Canal in early February they were in trenches at Ferry post under the actual command of the Maharaja[1] who had returned from France and was on his way back to India. At the encounter with the enemy near Katib-el- Khel in which the Maharaja was commanding the troops personally, he fired nineteen shots, all in the standing position. When the Turks were defeated, the Ganga Risala under the Maharaja's command, pursued the enemy. An appreciation of the services rendered by the Maharaja was also made in the despatches of General Sir John Maxwell, British commander-in-chief in Egypt. The excellent work and valuable services of the Ganga Risala were eulogized by Lord Hardinge[2] and Lord Chelmsford[3] in their official communications. These were further supplemented by communications from the Secretary of State for India and the British commander-in-chief in Egypt. The services of the Ganga Risala were also mentioned in despatches dated 1.10.1916 and 28.6.1917.[4]

The King Emperor praised, through his telegram[5] of 4th March, 1918, the House of Bikaner for its loyalty to the British

1. A Short History of the Services rendered by the Imperial Service Troops during the Great War, 1914-18.
2. Lord Hardinge's Kharita dated 14.3.1916
3. Lord Chelmsford's Kharita of 11.3.1918.
4. A Brief statement of Bikaner's services in the Great War, 1914-18, p.5.
5. Ibid.

Crown. In another cablegram of the 18th November, 1918,[1] on the occasion of the signing of the Armistice, the King Emperor again expressed his appreciation of the war services of Bikaner, the spirit that the Princes and people of India showed at the very outbreak of the war and the unwavering unity of purpose with the rest of the empire. Further the Viceroy informed the Maharaja that the Bikaner troops had fought in Egypt most gallantly which had enhanced the reputation of the Bikaner forces. To add to this glory, Mr. Austin Chamberlain, the then Secretary of State for India, also paid[2] glowing tributes to the Bikaner troops for their gallant fighting in Egypt and Palestine.

In recognition of these war services, the Maharaja was created a K.C.B. in 1918[3] and his personal salute was raised from seventeen to nineteen guns. He also received the Grand Cordon of the Nile and the British War and Victory Medals. In 1919 he was created a G.C.V.O. Besides, two Turkish rifles, two aeroplanes, seven machine-guns, ninety-one rifle, and some swords and pistols, all siezed from the enemy, were also presented to the Bikaner State by the British Government.

Meanwhile, there had come about a change in the programme of the Indian National Congress. Till 1915 the Congress had stood for attaining, by constitutional means, self-government within the empire on Dominion lines. But with the entry of Mrs. Besant in the Congress in 1914 and the death of Gokhle and Pherozeshah Mehta, the goal was changed and the Home Rule Movement started. The Muslim League also fell in line with the movement. The Morley-Minto Reforms introduced in 1909, the inclusion of Indian leaders like Sir S.P.Sinha and Mr.V.Krishnaswamy Iyer in the Viceroy's Executive Council, the re-unification of Bengal which had all tended to sober the political agitation

1. A Brief statement of Bikaner's services in the Great War, 1914-18, p. 4
2. Ibid, p. 6
3. Appendix XX.

in India were now interpreted as a vindication of the agitation.[1] Moreover, the Allies had declared that the war was fought for safeguarding liberty and making the world safe for democracy. The British Government was anxious to convince the Indians that the British Government was ever desirous to associate them with matters of concern to the empire. It accepted Sir Mohammad Shafi's resolution in the Imperial Legislative Council of India in September, 1915, and decided in 1916 that such closer association between the Dominion and the mother country was envisaged. An Imperial Conference was summoned to meet in London in 1917 and the Maharaja of Bikaner was chosen to be one of the three Indian representatives to the Conference.[2]

The Maharaja, as a patriotic Indian, sympathised with the demand for a higher status for India in the empire and he could well understand the anxiety of the people of British India for their freedom and emancipation, though there was some misunderstanding at the time that the princes were not sympathetic to their aspirations. Therefore, as soon as he was selected as one of India's representatives to the Imperial Conference, he took the first opportunity to dispel the misunderstanding. Though the Maharaja was selected to represent the Princely Order, he realised full well that he was going to London not as the Ruler of Bikaner, or even as the representative of the princes but as a spokesman of his mother-country. And this realisation is manifestly to be found in his speech delivered in Bombay on the 7th February, 1917 at the banquet given by the princes in his honour before his departure for England when he said that whether they came from the territories of British India or those of the Indian States, they were all Indians who were entirely united in loyalty and attachment to their King-Emperor,

1. Sir John Cumming; Political India 1832-1932, pp. 52-60
2. The other two representatives were, Sir James Meston and Sir S.P.Sinha.

in their affection for their mother-country and in their deep and genuine solicitude for their bretheren of all creeds and communities throughout India. In the same speech he also expressed his conviction that after the war was over the angle of vision as regards India would be still further altered in favour of every reasonable and ripe political reform and that the just claims and aspirations of India to enable her to work out her destiny under Britain's guiding hand and protection would not be forgotten.[1] The Maharaja was always a nationalist at heart, but on this occasion he came out in the open. It was for the first time that the ruler of a big State had expressed his views at a banquet which was presided over by a British Governor and attended by so many ruling princes when Maharaja Ganga Singh expressed his feelings of a nationalistic and patriotic nature. This caught the politicians of British India by surprise and one and all acclaimed that the pronouncement coming as it did from the representative of the ruling princes selected by His Majesty's Government, had changed the entire complexion of the Indian political movement. The general Indian reaction to this epoch-making speech as reflected in the press at the time was the hailing of the selection of the Maharaja as one of the Indian representatives[2] and an appreciation of the fact that even the princes, patriotic as they were, could publicly discuss the problems of the empire with frankness and courage.[3] The Maharaja's speech marked an important stage in the growth of the idea of Indian unity and nationality. He tore down the veil of mutual distrust which had so far impeded the free flow of sympathy between British India and the States. He brought the life of India as it existed at that time into focus, brought princes and peasant, educated and uneducated,

1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech delivered on 7.2.1917 at a banquet given in his honour by the ruling princes of India at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay, prior to his departure for England.
2. The Madras Times, 1.5.1917
3. Amrit Bazar Patrika, 15.5.1917

into line, and showed a new spirit which stirred the depth of India's heart, longing for a fuller life that was to make India under the British Crown a glory of the British empire.[1]

The Maharaja, together with Lord Sinha, attended both the Imperial Conference and the Imperial War Cabinet, and though they had technically gone to England as advisers and assistants to the Secretary of State, no punctilious distinctions were maintained. The Maharaja had exactly the same opportunities of taking part in the deliberations as any other member. Mr. Chamberlain consulted him freely and accorded to him the position of a colleague and co-adjutor in public.[2]

The Imperial War Cabinet had assembled with the single objective of considering the means of victory and the terms of a victorious peace. At the Imperial Conference though consideration of domestic issues had been the usual practice in the past, it was decided by common consent that in view of the gravity of the occasion at which they were meeting, the Conference would devote itself solely to the consideration of the issues relating to the War and that other matters could wait till after peace was established. Yet Maharaja Ganga Singh never lost an opportunity of familiarising his fellow citizens in the empire, whether at public functions to which he was invited or in conversation with men of importance in public life,[3] with the needs and hopes of India. It was on one such occasion that the Maharaja while expressing profound gratification at India's being invited for the first time to participate in the deliberations of the Imperial War Conference and the Imperial War Cabinet espoused India's cause and said that India also aspired for making, under the guidance and with the help of Great Britain an advance on constitutional lines, both politically and economically, and ultimately attaining freedom and autonomy.

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1. Indian Social Reformer 11.2.1917
2. The Hindustan Review, August, 1917.
3. Luncheon given by the Empire Parliamentary Association(United Kingdom Branch) to the Indian Delegates, in the House of Commons, Harcourt Room, on 24.4.1917.

He asserted that so far as princely India was concerned, contrary to the belief held in some quarters, the princes would rejoice at such progress rather than resent any political advancements. And referring to the then existing conditions in India which were often put forward as an excuse to defer consideration of Indian aspirations, he pointed out that these problems were not insurmountable. As to the diversity of races, he added that this should prove no impediment and cited the example of Canada which was inhabited by as many different races and pointed out that even in Great Britain there were three different races. He reminded them that India was not a country but a vast continent, not a State but an empire within the empire. Speaking of the prevalent unrest in India, he said that it was of two kinds: one which was attempted to be propagated by the seditionists but which was meeting with small response and could easily be eradicated; the other which was 'legitimate' unrest originating from the slow political progress made in India. This legitimate unrest, the Maharaja said, could be met if the problem was handled with sympathy, imagination, generosity and broad mindedness and the people of India given greater voice and power.[1]

And this was not a solitary occasion. In an interview to the Times on the 10th May, 1917 he again emphasised that a big country like India was bound to become independent some day and that voluntary association between the two countries on basis of equality would be of advantage and that sooner the reforms were introduced the better. He further pointed out at the time that excessive caution on the part of the British Government would be as great an error as the acceptance of ill-considered and rash proposals would be. He also reiterated his attempt to dispel any doubts in the minds of the critics as to the princes looking with disfavour any political advancement in British India.

1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 24th April, 1917- Appendix XXI.

On the contrary, he averred, the princes would be happy to see India politically progressing on constitutional lines under the British flag.[1]

The sagacity and statesmanship of the Maharaja made a great impression upon those he came in contact with and Mr. Lloyd George, the then Prime Minister of England, paid glowing tributes to his work in the first Imperial War Cabinet. He said:

> " 'Bikaner' as he was familiarly and affectionately called - the Indian Prince - was a magnificient specimen of manhood of his great country. We soon found he was one of 'the wises men that came from the east'. More and more did we come to rely on his advice, especially on all questions that affected India."[2]

As to the Maharaja's being selected as a representative to the Imperial War Council and War Cabinet, Sir Roper Lethbridge said that he adequately represented the British administration, and the educated classes of British India, who were becoming the recognised spokesmen of the dumb millions of the two thirds of the Indian continent and the princes who were the actual rulers of the remaining one third of India. According to him it was generally held at the time in India that no better and distinguished representative of the Indians could be found.[3]

The Indian press also showed appreciation of the work done by the Maharaja at the Conferences in bringing closer the English people and the Indians and in creating an understanding and sympathy for the aspirations of India. Though the Maharaja was proud of England's connection with India, he was no less proud of India's honour and of her rightful place in the British empire. He expressed in burning words the absurdity of the

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1. India's Imperial partnership, pp. 35-38 -Appendix XXII.
2. Panikkar; His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner -A Biography, p.177.
3. Asiatic Review dated 10.5.1917, pp.463-68, article entitled "The Indian Representation on the Imperial War Conference" by Sir Roper Lethbridge.

theory so dear to certain antiquated Anglo-Indian officials that India was held by the sword. He exploded the superstition so sedulously promulgated by Anglo-Indian editors and administrators of the type of Lord Sydenham. He falsified the gloomy forebodings entertained at the time of his selection as an Indian representative on the Imperial Conference and displayed a wide grasp of his country's best interests.[1] He laid down the lines on which advancement in British India was likely to proceed for years to come.[2] His utterances were marked not only by a spirit of patriotism and broad sympathy but by a message of love and cooperation between the English people and the Indians. By his personal influence, timely and wise speeches and official letters, the recent congress by a resolution asked for an authoritative declaration of the aims of British policy in India.[3]

Mr. Austin Chamberlain, the then Secretary of State for India, was so impressed by the statesmanship of Maharaja Ganga Singh that he asked him to write a minute on important Indian questions. As the question was of vital importance for the attainment of better status for India in the empire, and as he could not write the note while in England, he took the first opportunity by sacrificing his leisure at Rome on his way back to India from England and forwarded it to Mr. Chamberlain on the 15th May, 1917. He said:

> " ..... I hope, that it has enabled me to put before you the strong view I honestly hold of the serious situation that is likely to be created in India in certain eventualities. The questions, I am convinced, will receive your earnest, and all India will hope, favourable consideration but in the interests of the empire, as well as of India, I would beg leave once again to urge and implore you to do something on a really liberal, sympathetic and generous scale and in such a manner as will strike the imagination and sentiments of the east and bind India and England closer together." [4]

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1. United India and Native States, Madras, 7.6.1917
2. Indian Princes, 14.6.1917.
3. The Indian Review, 17.8.1917
4. Maharaja Ganga Singh's letter to Mr. Austin Chamberlain, dated 15.5.1917 forwarding the Rome Note. This note has become very famous and known very well by the name "Rome Note."

While dealing with the question of self-government for India, the Maharaja said:

> "The whole question is whether or not this is the goal of British rule in India. I submit that there can be but one answer and that is emphatically "Yes". If the granting, when the right time comes, of self-government within the empire is not the goal of British rule in India, then it is impossible to conceive what the goal is."[1]
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> "It is hardly necessary to state that the desire for self-government in any educated people is a simple elementary fact of human nature or that according to western ideals self-government is government by the people, that is, democracy as opposed to autocracy or bureaucratic government-in other words representative government...."[2]

Maharaja Ganga Singh was conscious of the necessity and pressed for the grant of self-government. He was convinced that this should be done without delay:

> ".....No good purpose could be served by delaying it. On the contrary the beneficial effect it will produce and the discontent and alarm that it will dispel render it all the more essential that it should be proclaimed now. ....."[3]

Bold words like these were startling for both, the leaders of the Indian freedom struggle who never expected such a strong stand from an Indian ruling prince as also for the supporters of the empire who hoped that an Indian prince at least would never so emphatically stand for self-government in India. Even the nationalist press of the day hailed it- and rightly so, as the dawn of a new era.

In this note the Maharaja also availed himself of the opportunity of quelling the apprehensions which were at the time being expressed as to the effect on the Indian army of such a declaration in favour of self-government. The Maharaja, a soldier himself, who fought at the front in the recent Great War, asserted that should such a view be really held by any responsible officer, he would say that while no such danger was

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1. Rome Note, p. 5
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid, p.11.

perceptible to the Indian mind, the fact should not be lost sight of that the classes from which the soldiers of our Indian army were recruited did not find employment in the army alone. While some were in the army, their brothers might be following a legal or a political career, and they were all bound to exchange views and make comparisons. With education and western ideas spreading over the country, Indians whether in the army or in civil employment, would all desire to see their country materially advancing. If the bulk of the people were discontented and dejected and, in the absence of any declaration, saw no political future for their country, the discontent and unrest was sure to spread gradually to the army as had happened in other countries. Thus, withholding of the declaration was far more likely, at a future date, to cause an adverse effect on the army.[1]

The result of all these efforts of the Maharaja in advocating the desirability and urgency of introducing reforms so as to give India self-government, when the time came, within the empire, was a better and correct understanding by the British people of the agitation that was going on in India and the swerving of their opinion "towards an expression of their legitimate aspirations" instead of an impression of seditious movement entertained by them hitherto.

The historic declaration of 20th August, 1917 follows, closely, the lines of Maharaja Ganga Singh's Rome Note which stressed a four-point programme, viz., the announcement at the earliest possible opportunity that the ultimate objective of British rule in India was the grant of self-government within the empire; secondly, further liberal reforms in the constitution and functioning of the provincial legislative councils as well as the Imperial Legislative Councils; thirdly the grant of greater autonomy to the Government of India and the provincial

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1. Rome Note, pp. 9-10

councils and lastly the establishment of a Council of Princes for dealing with matters concerning the British Government and the Indian States.

During the first World War, the political horizon of India was clouded by two agitations, one comprising of the activities of the extremists who wanted to violently uproot the British and the other covering the Home Rule movement. While the extremists started seditions and indulged in subversive activities, the supporters of the Home Rule movement including Bal Gangadhar Tilak, wanted the British to leave everything to the Indians. The British feared lest these agitations should ultimately remove India from the British empire. Maharaja Ganga Singh reconciled both - apprehensions of the British and the aspirations of the Indians. He suggested that even after obtaining self-government India should remain a part of the British empire. What he had envisaged at that time was more or less what we have achieved today by our association with the British Commonwealth of Nations even after Independence.

The Maharaja returned to India, landing at Bombay on the 31st May, 1917 and joining his family at Mt. Abu on the 2nd June, 1917. In June 1918 he was again invited to participate in the deliberations of the Imperial War Cabinet and Conference to be held in England but he had reluctantly to decline owing to pressing State affairs demanding his attention. But when a truce was announced on the 11th November, 1918 and it was decided to finalise the Peace Treaty, the Viceroy again telegraphed[1] him asking him to proceed immediately to England. His selection as one of India's representatives on the Peace Conference was greatly acclaimed.[2] He and Sir S.P.Sinha, the other Indian delegate for the Peace Conference, reached England in December, 1918 and attended the Imperial War Conference and

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1. Lord Chelmsford's telegram dated 15.11.1918 - Appendix XXIII
2. The Leader, 21.11.1918.
   Bombay Chronicle, 29.11.1918.

Imperial War Cabinet meeting held there during the period.[1] On the 1st of January, 1919 he was invested by the King Emperor with full powers as one of the plenipotentiaries for the Peace Conference and left with the British delegation on the 11th January, 1918 for Paris to participate in the preliminary conversations with the heads of the Allied and Associated Governments.[2] Though the direction of the Conference was centred more or less in the hands of the Big Four: President Wilson, Monsieur Clemenceau, Mr. Lloyd George and Signor Orlando, Mr. Lloyd George took every opportunity to consult the empire delegation and in these conferences the Maharaja took an active part.

The question of paramount importance that faced the Indian delegation was that of India being represented on the League of Nations. The argument that India was neither independent nor self-governing was being argued against India's inclusion in the proposed League of Nations and found support even within the British empire delegation. Lord Sinha therefore prepared a note and forcefully refuted the argument pointing out that the question of internal autonomy was not the test to be applied for the membership of the League. To this note Maharaja Ganga Singh appended a memorandum dated the 2nd February, 1919 wherein he drew attention to the clause relating to the membership being made open to all civilized Nations who could be relied upon to promote its objectives. The Maharaja pointed out that the races of India represented a civilisation of almost untold antiquity[3] and stressed that on this ground alone the admission of India to the membership of the League was unimpeachable. He further

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1. The Daily Telegraph, 18.12.1918
   Manchester Guardian, 21.12.1918
   The Daily Telegraph, 23.12.1918
2. The Times, 16.1.1919
3. Speech of Lord Crewe in the House of Lords at the outbreak of the War as quoted in Panikkar's His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, A Biography, p. 198.

urged that if the people of India with their ancient civilization and heritage could be considered fit to fight along with other civilised nations in the various theatres of war, there could be no cogent reason to deny India admission to the membership of the League. In the meeting held on the 5th February, 1919 to consider the constitution of the League, the question of India's representation came up and Lord Robert Cecil who represented the British empire accepted India's inclusion for it was understood that she would in any case be represented being one of the signatories to the Covenant.

When, however, the draft covenant came up, it was found that article 7 made eligible for membership only those colonies that enjoyed full powers. At the time Mr. Montagu and Lord Sinha had both returned to England and Maharaja Ganga Singh was in sole charge of the Indian delegation and there was a great apprehension that the question of India's representation on the League may be decided against her. He, therefore, immediately wrote to Lord Robert Cecil on the 12th February, 1919 asking for definite information. Even Mr. Montagu was so perturbed on the subject that he cabled the Maharaja enquiring if India was all right and if not his being informed by cipher so that he could see the Prime Minister before he left London for Paris.[1] Lord Robert Cecil replied that article 7 covered only the cases of such countries which were not signatories to the Covenant adding that even if any argument could be made against this, it was still open to him to demand the inclusion of India on the protocol, the list of which had not been drawn till then. Thus a situation, which would otherwise have been very awkward and embarrassing, was averted by the timely action of the Maharaja. Ultimately, India's name was expressly included amongst the original members who were also signatories to the Peace Treaty.

Another important and embarrassing question that came up

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1. Lord Montagu's telegram -Appendix XXIV

before the Peace Conference was the suggestion putforth by the Allied Governments regarding the partition of Turkey. Leading Indian Muslim residents in Europe presented a memorandum to the British foreign Secretary against such a step. The Indian Muslims were also greatly agitated and on the 20th March, 1919 the Maharaja received a long cablegram from Haji Chotani urging that the holy places of Islam should be left to the Sultan of Turkey as also that the Peace Treaty should be such as to reconcile the Muslims to the British. This put the Indian delegation in a very embarrassing situation, specially as all the three delegates were non-Muslim, and when Lord Sinha had to return to England leaving the Maharaja alone to represent India, a section of the Indian press hinted that a Muslim delegate should be appointed.[1] The Maharaja immediately wrote to Mr. Montagu and enclosed a copy of the telegram. He urged the Secretary of State to see if a public statement could be made announcing that the Indian Muslim viewpoint was always being kept in view and that everything possible was being done to press the Muslim case. He also solicited permission to send a telegram in reply and enclosed a draft for approval.[2] The subject was taken up for discussion by the Indian delegation at the meeting of the British empire delegation on the 3rd April,1919, when both the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State were also present. They agreed that though it was unusual to send a reply to such telegrams, a reply could be sent on the lines proposed by the Maharaja in view of the special circumstances of the case. The Secretary of State accordingly telegraphed the Viceroy to make a statement on those lines but it was never made.[3]

1. Bombay Chronicle, 20.2.1919
2. Panikkar; His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, A Biography, p. 204.
   Mr. Fisher, while replying to Commander Wedgwood in the House of Commons emphasised that the Indian delegation to the Peace Conference was fully cognisant of the special interests of the Indian Mohamadans in the Peace settlement and Mr. Montagu gave an assurance that he and his colleagues charged themselves with the advocacy of the Indian Mohamadan interests in the connection that these formed an essential part of the interests of India - The Times of India, 3.4.1919
3. Panikkar, Op.cit., p.205.

The activities of the Maharaja not only show the extent to which Indian interests of all classes were near to his heart, they also prove his sagacity and the esteem in which he was held by the authorities in England.

Another proposal that emerged at the Peace Conference was from the Japanese seeking a declaration for racial equality. It was a suggestion which was of great interest to the Indian delegation. The empire delegation, however, opposed it, but the Indian delegation consisting of Lord Sinha and the Maharaja, supported it in view of the fact that a great deal of racial discrimination existed in India.

The Maharaja also supported a reservation made by Lord Sinha in the matter of limiting hours for labourers and demanded the exclusion of Indian States from the scope of President Wilson's proposal. He made an important statement in which he said that as the territories of the Indian princes lay outside British India and as legislation enacted for British India by the British Government could not apply to the Indian States and furthermore, as the only competent authority to legislate for an Indian State was the Government of the State concerned, it should be clearly understood with reference to article 19 of the draft convention that the authority within whose competence the matter lay for the enactment of legislation or other action should be the constituted authorities of the State concerned.[1] A timely reservation of this type was of great importance to the States as it safeguarded effectively the autonomy of the States against being infringed by a British enactment on the subject automatically applying to the territories of the States.

Maharaja Ganga Singh had during this period built up friendship with world famous statesmen, such as M. Clemenceau, Mr. Lloyd George and others. Strangely this was the first time

1. Poineer, 24.4.1919
   The Bengalee, 16.5.1919

that an Indian ruler had worked on terms of equality with the British-Indian leaders. The Maharaja's wide friendship with the British Indian leaders and cooperation with them in the task of furthering the interests of India stand out very clearly especially with regard to his collaboration with Mr. Gokhle and Lord Sinha.

The Maharaja who had returned to London on the 24th February, 1919 along with Sir James Dunlop Smith,[1] ~~and~~ was in attendance on the King-Emperor, as one of his A.D.C's on the afternoon of the 1st March, 1919 when the King reviewed four brigades of the new army of occupation at Hyde Park.[2]

At this time the Indo-British Association which had been inaugurated in London in 1917 with the avowed object of fostering the unity and advancement of the Indian peoples, was carrying on false propaganda about the conditions prevailing in India and agitating against the grant of reforms which, it said, would strike at the very root of the rule of the King Emperor in India.[3] It indulged in vituperation against the Indian princes. The Maharaja, therefore, took the opportunity to expose the Association, while speaking at the banquet given in London to Lord Sinha on the 7th March, 1919. An impression had been created that the princes of India were hostile to the appointment of Lord Sinha as the Under Secretary of State for India as also to the reforms under contemplation. The Maharaja in his speech made his most authoritative and emphatic denial as one representing the princes, in England, for the second time.[4]

1. The Times, 25.2.1919
2. The Times, 1.3.1919.
3. The United India and Indian States, 30.4.1919
   The Leader, 2.5.1919
4. The Deccan Herald, 13.5.1919

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He also refuted successfully another allegation that the army in India would resent Lord Sinha's appointment.[1]

The Maharaja did very useful work in familiarising aristocratic circles in England with the need for political and administrative reforms in India.[2] The Indian delegates played a conspicuous part in securing a modification of the labour charter and in resisting any decision on the Turkish question before opportunity was given for ascertaining its repercussions upon Muslim feeling in India.[3]

The King Emperor, the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for India and the Viceroy, all eulogized his services at the Peace Conference.[4] So great was the impression created by his deliberations in the Peace Conference that the University of Oxford conferred upon him the honorary degree of the Doctor of Civil Laws.

The Peace Treaty having been signed on the 28th June, 1919, the Maharaja sailed from Marsailles for India on the 3rd July, 1919.

When he went to England on a holiday in 1922,[5] Lord Peel,

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1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 7.3.1919 on the occasion of the banquet given to Lord Sinha in London on his promotion to Peerage and appointment as the Under Secretary of State for India - Indian Imperial Partnership, p.16; Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.2278/XXVI, part II-B.
2. The Bengalee, 3.4.1919 -A Londoner's Note Book, London March,3.
3. The Times of India, 27.5.1919
4. Proceedings of the Conference of Ruling Princes & Chiefs, November, 1919, p. 36. Also Lord Chelmsford's Kharita dated the 30th June, 1919, Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2278/XXVI part II.B, Appendix A of the Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, Bikaner State, October, 1919 Also Maharaja Ganga Singh's closing speech dated 20.10.1919 in the Legislative Assembly, Bikaner State, October, 1919.
5. Almost all the visits of the Maharaja to England or Europe were on official mission. Only on one or two occasions such visits were made on private reasons (of health).

the then Secretary of State for India, invited the Maharaja to join the Indian delegation to the League of Nations, but owing to family reasons, it was not possible for him to accept the invitation then, but on the invitation being renewed in 1924, he accepted it.

The session of 1924 was a momentous one meeting under the shadow of Italian occupation of Corfu. While discussing disarmament the Maharaja made a speech which looking in retrospect at the Himalayan frontier problem of India today, spells significant words. The Maharaja's speech was unfairly criticised for the lack of foresight in the Indian press at that time. Speaking on the occasion he said that in India we had a military problem of exceptional difficulty and complexity. The frontier on the north-west was peopled by hardy and turbulent tribes who knew of no law but that of blood-feud and where illicit arms traffic had not been brought under complete control. Other sections of the frontier which consisted of dense and almost pathless jungles were occupied by equally restless tribes. With his usual far-sightedness he pointed out to the League the menace to the security of India from these frontiers which could not be countered by economic sanctions or the use of the principles of arbitration; and this factor had to be taken into account while fixing the standard of military strength.[1]

Another important issue which the Maharaja, as the Indian representative in the third Committee stressed was with regard to the question of representation of India on the health organisation. He pointed out that inspite of India's heavy payment towards this organisation, the corresponding benefit that accrued was negligible, and its activities were wholly diverted to Russia and Europe. He boldly pointed out the sufferings that the Indian people had undergone owing to the

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1. Proceedings of the Meetings of the Chamber of Princes, November, 1924, pp. 98-104 -statement by H.H. the Maharaja of Bikaner regarding his work at the Assembly of the League of Nations.

ravages of epidemics. As a result of the Maharaja's consistent endeavours the Committee passed a resolution requiring the health organisation to communicate its programme as well as a report of its activities to the International Health Office in Paris established by the Rome Convention of 1917 on which India was also represented. This resolution gave India a voice in determining the public health policy of the League of Nations which was indeed a great and important achievement.[1]

The Maharaja's position in the delegation was an important one as can be seen from Mr. Wickham Steed's "Review of Reviews" of November and December, 1924. In the scene II, he has mentioned that when the Maharaja went to the tribune, the assembly resigned itself to hear one more of the usual "uplifting" exhortations but was soon aroused to attention and even admiration by the clear, brief and to the point, matter of fact speech which convinced the audience that the Maharaja knew what he said and said what he meant. The Maharaja had made the best of all the English speeches at the Assembly.[2]

The Maharaja's work in the Assembly meetings of the League of Nations received due appreciation from the Viceroy who in a cable said that he was most grateful to the Maharaja for his labours on India's behalf.[3]

The Maharaja was again invited to attend the League of Nations in September, 1930, this time as the leader of the Indian delegation, an honour which for the first and the last time went to an Indian prince. The other members of the delegation were Nawab Sir Zulfiqar Ali Khan and Sir Ewart Greaves and at a later stage Sir Basant Mullick. The substitute delegates were Sir Deva Prasad Sarvadhikary, Sir Denys Bray and

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1. Proceedings of the Meetings of the Chamber of Princes, November, 1924, pp. 105-06
2. Panikkar, His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, A Biography, pp. 310-11.
3. Proceedings of the Meeting of the Chamber of Princes, pp. 106.

Sir Jehangir Coyajee. On this occasion the Maharaja participated in the deliberations of the third and fourth committees which dealt with disarmament and reorganisation of the League Secretariat respectively. In the committee on disarmament M. Briand suggested a kind of a European cooperation which, he maintained, was in the nature of a regional agreement designed to fulfil the purpose of the Covenant. But the Maharaja while agreeing to the underlying aims of European cooperation, expressed the fear of misunderstanding such a step might create outside Europe, as also of the possible consequences it may lead to.[1]

Being one of the delegates invited to represent India at the Imperial Conference in London, the Maharaja proceeded direct to London from Geneva and attended the meetings held in October and November, 1930. Sir Mohammad Shafi was the other Indian delegate and Sir Geoffrey Corbett and Sir Padamji Ginwala were the two substitute delegates.

An important question that was taken up at this Conference was the one relating to changes contemplated in the nationality and common status of the subjects of the various parts of the empire. The Maharaja, as a representative of the special interests of the princes of India wrote a note[2] to the Prime Minister as also to the Secretary of State for India to place on record the fact that his presence at the Conference and his preference to refrain from making a speech then should not be taken to mean acceptance of any alteration in the status and nationality of the Indian States, their rulers and subjects. He received an assurance to that effect from both.[3]

The Indian political scene was, meanwhile, undergoing a sudden transformation. The activities of the Indian National Congress, which ever since its inception in 1885, had been

1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 16.9.1930 at the Eleventh Session of the Assembly of the League of Nations.
2. Proceedings of the meetings of the Chamber of Princes, March, 1931, p. 39
3. Ibid, pp. 32-33

directed on constitutional lines, underwent a change in 1904 and thereafter new and disturbing forces made themselves felt. The partition of Bengal in 1905 and the adoption by the Congress of the policy of the boycott of British goods saw the emergence of a new spirit of bitterness. Gokhle declared the goal of the Congress as the governance of India in the interests of the Indians themselves, and the attainment, in course of time, of a form of government similar to that obtaining in the self-governing colonies of the British empire.[1] Lala Lajpat Rai declared that the Indians were perfectly justified in becoming the arbiters of their own destiny and trying to obtain freedom.[2] Yet, and inspite of the fact that a section of the leftists in the Congress had associations with the anarchist movement in Bengal, the main body, and the larger one, still believed in securing advancement by constitutional means. Mr. Wedderburn, the president of the Congress in 1910, declared that "hand in hand with the British people India can most safely take her first steps on the new path of progress."[3] This attitude was maintained till 1916 when the Home Rule theory propounded by Mrs. Besant, who had entered the Congress in 1914, was adopted at the Lucknow Session. The Muslim League which had sprung up as a result of Muslim dissention over the question of the partition of Bengal from amongst the ranks of the Congress, again joined the Congress. In 1919 the tension had reached a crisis as a result of economic distress, Muslim anxiety over the Turkish question at the peace conference, the introduction of the Rowllat bills for the suppression of anarchy and the fears that the proposed constitutional reforms might be delayed.

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1. Report of the 21st Indian National Congress, p. 13 as quoted by L.F.Rushbrook Williams in Chapter III "The Indian National Congress in its various phases" of Sir John Cumming's Political India, 1832-1932, p. 54
2. Ibid.
3. Ratcliffe; Sir William Wedderburn, p. 150 as quoted by L.F.Rushbrook Williams in Chapter III, "The Indian National Congress in its various Phases" of Sir John Cumming's book Political India 1832-1932, p. 58

Before the Mutiny the Indian States had stood completely isolated from one another, their rulers having been placed under restraint from interfering in the affairs of any other State or Power to the extent of refraining them from even entering into any correspondence with them except with the previous sanction and through the medium of the Governor-General in Council.[1] But after the Mutiny, rapid development of communications made such an isolation untenable. Moreover, the Mutiny had brought out in clear relief the effects of isolation and the British had begun to realise the need of a closer association between themselves and the princes. An incentive to this was given by the Queen's proclamation of 1858 on the assumption of the title of Queen Empress by Victoria. As a first step it was proposed to create an "Imperial Privy Council" consisting partly of selected ruling chiefs and partly of the highest European officials.[2] The scheme was, however, abandoned. In 1877 Lord Lytton again made efforts to form such a Committee by appointing eight princes as "Counsellor of the Empress" with the idea of seeking counsel and advice of the princes and chiefs of India in matters of importance and thus associating them with the Paramount Power. The council, however, never met.[3] Lord Curzon, during his viceroylty, also realised the need and importance

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1. Cumming, Political India 1832-1932, Chapter XIV, "The Politics of the Indian States, the Chamber of Princes, and the Federal Idea" contributed by Sir Robert Erskine Holland, p. 261.
2. Minute dated 5.1.1914 by Maharaja Ganga Singh on the Representation of the Indian States in the Government of India and the formation of a Council of Princes, pp. 3-4.
3. The British Crown and the Indian States, p. 75
   Cumming, Op.cit., Chapter XIV, "The Politics of the Indian States, the Chamber of Princes and the Federal Idea", contributed by Sir Robert Erskine Holland, p.262.

of creating such a Council. He had become convinced that the ruling chiefs "were not scattered atoms in a heterogenous cumbersome mass, but coordinate units in a harmonious and majestic whole."[1] He believed that the princes had become an integral part of the imperial organisation of India and were no less concerned than the Viceroy in the administration of the country and claimed them as his colleagues and partners.[2] He too advocated in 1904 the formation of a council of princes, and said that the princes felt more and more concerned for the care and responsibilities of the empire and yearned to associate themselves with it.[3] But the scheme was not approved by the Home Government.[4]

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1. Minute dated 5.1.1914 by Maharaja Ganga Singh on the Representation of the Indian States in the Government of India and the formation of a Council of Princes, p. 4

2. Lord Curzon in India 1898-1905: Lord Curzon's speech at State banquet at Gwalior on 29.11.1899. Also, Lord Curzon's speech at State banquet at Jaipur on 28.11.1902 -

   "Your Highness had reminded me that three years ago I claimed the Indian chiefs as my colleagues and partners in the task of Indian administration. It is as such, as fellow workers in their several exalted stations, that I have ever since continued to treat and to regard them. On many occasions I have discussed with them the conditions and circumstances of their own government and on others, as Your Highness knows full well, I have sought and obtained their cooperation, and advice."

3. As quoted by Sir Robert Erskine Holland in "The Politics of the Indian States, the Chamber of Princes, and the Federal Idea" forming Chapter XIV of Sir John Cumming's "Political India 1832-1932" p. 262.

4. Ibid.

After Curzon, the pressure of the anti-British agitation began to be increasingly felt, and Lord Minto wrote to Lord Morley on May 28, 1906 that he had been thinking a good deal of a possible counter-poise to Congress aims; he thought that they might find a solution in the Council of Princes.[1] In 1908, Lord Minto actually took the princes into his confidence when he consulted them individually on the question of the growth of sedition in India. But nothing more tangible came out and his wish remained a pious hope. In 1913 Lord Hardinge invited some of the princes to confer with him on a question of education which was of special interest to their order and again a conference of the princes and chiefs was called in 1914 for the same purpose.

While these were the political conditions obtaining in India during the first quarter of the twentieth century and the British were passing through anxious times, the princes also had their problems. On the one hand their treaties had begun to be interpreted to suit the convenience of the Paramount Power which gradually and imperceptibly established itself in a position of unquestioned political authority from that of allies and friends. The scope of paramountcy was made vast and all-embracing. Lord Curzon even went to the extent of saying that"sovereignty of the Crown is everywhere unchallenged. It has itself laid down the limitations of its own prerogatives."[2] And in another speech he had very lucidly laid down the conception the British had of their duties and the corresponding obligations of the princes. He said that, while the Crown undertook the duty of protecting a State and its chief against all foes, the prince had the corresponding obligation to act in all things with loyalty to the Sovereign Power, to abstain from all acts injurious to the government and to conduct the affairs of his State with

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1. Mary, Countess of Minto; India Minto and Morley, 1905-1910,p.29
2. Lord Curzon's speech at the Installation Darbar of the Nawab of Bhawalpur on the 12th November, 1903, Lord Curzon in India, p. 226.

integrity and credit.[1] This was a clear manifestation of the British attitude towards interference in the internal affairs of the States contrary to the terms of the treaties. A notion had come to be formed in the minds of some of the scholars on matters relating to Indian States that the treaties had become obsolete. A change had taken place in the political practice and the princes were not happy over it.

On the other hand, the anti-British agitation had caused apprehensions in the minds of the princes. They had begun to feel anxious about the future set-up, and feared complete annihilation. They had become greatly alarmed over the criticism offered by the British Indian leaders against their rule. They feared lest these agitators should, after assuming power, bring about complete destruction of their order. This aroused in them the natural anxiety to obtain from the British Government an explicit avowal of the direct relationship of the States with the Crown so as to afford them the security of their internal sovereignty.[2]

It is with this background and the Maharaja's interpretation of loyalty that his subsequent activities have to be viewed to bring into relief the relationship between the House of Bikaner and the Central Power. He owed loyalty to the Emperor and the empire, to India as a nation,[3] to his throne, his State and his people, and to the princely order of India. His loyalty to the Crown inspired in him the zeal to ensure that the links of the empire were not broken and that the supremacy of the Crown was maintained. His loyalty to the nation impelled him to do all in his power to help his country achieve self-government, but as a corollary to his loyalty to the Crown, he never desired to

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1. Lord Curzon's speech at the Installation of the Maharaja of Alwar on 10.12.1903; Lord Curzon in India, p.230
2. Cumming, Op.cit., Chapter XIV "The Politics of the Indian States the Chamber of Princes and the Federal Idea" contributed by Sir Robert Erskine Holland, p.264.
3. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 24.4.1917 delivered on the occasion of the Luncheon given by the Empire Parliamentary Association (United Kingdom Branch) to the Indian Delegates, in the House of Commons, Harcourt Room -Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2278/XXVI, pt.II-B.

raise any obstacles in the way of Indian constitutional advance, and if anything gave the freedom movement an impetus. He also wanted to see his internal sovereignty as well as that of the other princes secured.

Thus, an identity of interests had arisen between the British Government and the princes. The British Government desired the cooperation of the princes to checkmate seditionist and subversive activities and the princes wanted their security to be ensured. Maharaja Ganga Singh availed himself of the opportunity so offered and ably espoused the cause of the ruling princes being consulted by calling a conference, in any matter even remotely connected with the States.[1] He further took the opportunity of repeating his demand at the Chiefs' College conference held at Delhi on the 3rd March, 1914 when he said that he hoped that the Viceroy would soon convene similar meetings to deal with other subjects in which the States were closely connected as in that of the college; that such meetings could be convened regularly and that its business put on a regular basis.[2] An appreciation of the importance of these remarks appeared in the Times of India of the 16th March.[3] In 1915 again the Maharaja submitted a minute to the Viceroy on certain points relating to the Indian States and their rulers. In this minute, among other points, he raised the questions of changes in political phraseology, minority administration and Council of Princes. It was gratifying to note that Lord Chelmsford called for the third session of the conference of princes (the Conferences on educational matters called in 1913 and 1914 being treated as the first two) in October 1916 and while

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1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's minute dated 5.1.1914 on the Representation of the States in the Government of India.
2. Ibid, p. 13, Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech at the Chiefs' College Conference at Delhi on 3.3.1914.
3. The Times of India, 16.3.1914.

inaugurating the conference he declared its objective as that of advising the Government of India on certain matters concerning the princes, their States and their people.[1]

There were two important items on the agenda of this conference: the memorandum regarding the ceremonials to be observed on the occasion of installation and investiture Darbars in Indian States as circulated by the Political Secretary to the Government of India and the form of minority administration in the Indian States. The memorandum regarding the ceremonials purported to lay down the rule that every succession required the approval and sanction of the Government.[2] Maharaja Ganga Singh examined the position in its various aspects. He pointed out that an Indian ruler was the inheritor of his State which was conquered and built by his ancestors and did not derive his title from any grant requiring sanction. He added that the Indian ruler succeeded his predecessor by right of birth. He also pointed out that in case sanction was made necessary, the gaddi of a State should remain vacant till such time as it was received; but this would be in violation of the time-honoured custom and practice. He added that it would jeopardise the rights of the heirs-apparent and heirs-presumptive who had acquired them even before they arose.[3] The Maharaja proved beyond doubt that the position taken by the Political Secretary was untenable and carried the day by passing a resolution to provide for succession in the Hindu States according to Hindu law and usage, and in the case of the Mohammadan States to the law and usage of those States.[4]

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1. Viceroy's speech dated 30.10.1916 at the opening of the Conference of Ruling Princes & Chiefs at Delhi - Proceedings of the Conference of Ruling Princes and Chiefs held at Delhi in October-November, 1916, p.16
2. Draft memorandum regarding the ceremonies to be observed on the occasion of Installation and Investiture Darbars in Native States circulated by the Political Secretary, given in the Proceedings of the Conference of the Ruling Princes & Chiefs, October-November, 1916, pp.7-8
3. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 2.11.1916 at the Conference of the Ruling Princes & Chiefs at Delhi -Proceedings of the Conference of the Ruling Princes & Chiefs, October-November, 1916, pp.66-68
4. Ibid, p.107

After protracted discussions in which the Maharaja took a prominent part on the basis of his personal experience during his minority, a resolution embodying mutually accepted agreements was adopted. It provided that no pressure should be brought to bear on the rulers to introduce British methods of administration and that reforms should emanate from the ruler. It directed the Political Officers, temporarily charged with the administration of a State, to ensure preservation of the local customs. Administrative efficiency alone was not the only objective to be kept in view. It further laid down that the administration of a State during the minority of a Ruler should ordinarily be entrusted to a Council or a Regent if that be in accordance with the custom of the State, and traditions and customs should be scrupulously observed and maintained. The other provisions were for the employment by the Regency Council of local talent as far as possible, grants of jagirs or personal honours should not be conferred, interference with private property avoided, sale of jewellery avoided, no State territory to be exchanged, ceded or sold, and the education and training of the ruler should be carried out according to the recommendations of the Committee convened for the purpose.[1]

Thus the origin of the conference as well as its success was in a very great measure due to the untiring efforts and the political acumen of the Maharaja which was suitably acknowledged at the conference.[2]

While in England in 1917 to attend the Imperial War Conference and Imperial War Cabinet meetings, Mr. Austin Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for India, had asked the

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1. A.P.Nicholson; Scraps of Paper, pp.338-43
   Proceedings of the Conference of Ruling Princes and Chiefs, November, 1917, pp.109-12
2. Jam Sahib of Nawanagar's speech dated 3.11.1916 at the Conference of the Ruling Princes and Chiefs, Delhi- Proceedings of the Conference of the Ruling Princes and Chiefs, October-November, 1916, p.102 (vote of thanks proposed by the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar).

Maharaja to send him a note on some important Indian questions. The Maharaja sent a minute on the 15th May, 1917 from Rome.[1] In this note the Maharaja emphasised the need for a declaration regarding the grant of self-government to India within the British empire.[2] The other questions discussed in the minute were "further political reforms both in the Imperial Legislative Council as well as the Provincial Legislative Councils," "greater autonomy being granted and a lesser degree of interference with the government of India and provincial governments" and the creation of a Council or Assembly of princes.[3]

In chapter X of the joint report by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India on Indian constitutional reforms, matters relating to Indian States were dealt with and outlines of the proposed reforms recommended to be introduced were included. This important document was to be considered at the January, 1919, session of the Council of Princes, but since the Maharaja was called to London to represent India at the Peace Conference, he wrote a note giving expression to his views on the various points at issue and sent it to the Viceroy.

The joint report of the Viceroy and the Secretary of State raised many questions of fundamental importance to the princes: the establishment of a permanent council of princes, the examination of the relations between the Crown and the States, and the drawing of a line of division between the rulers who enjoyed full powers of internal administration, and the others. In his note the Maharaja welcomed the proposal of acceding to a demand for the formation of a permanent council of princes. But the vital cord struck in the note was his strong plea for a

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1. This refers to the famous Rome Note mentioned earlier on p.
2. Rome Note, p. 4
3. Ibid.

proper representation of the smaller chiefs on the proposed council of princes. The Maharaja contended that if these smaller chiefs were left out, they would neither benefit from the reforms introduced in British India nor would they be able to represent their case in the council. They would be left out and become weak links in the chain. He therefore advocated a reasonable and proportional representation of the smaller rulers on the council of princes.[1]

The Maharaja's presence in England was availed of at the time ~~of~~ the committee appointed by the Secretary of State for India for the consideration of the constitution of the Chamber was holding its sittings and he was invited to participate in the deliberations. He addressed the committee on 7th June, 1919 and presented a note.[2] In both these he referred to many points of special interest to the States, namely, direct political relations, revision of salutes, question of treaty rights, dignities and privileges of the ruling princes and interference by the Paramount Power. On the issues pertaining to the sovereign status of the princes and the machinery required for bringing the Chamber into existence, the Maharaja's views were accepted. The sovereign status of the princes which he had urged, was agreed to.[3] Regarding the machinery for bringing the Chamber into existence, it was felt that this could not be done by Parliamentary legislation as Parliament had no such authority; nor could the Government of India do it by administrative action. The Maharaja with his characteristic political sagacity at once suggested a Royal Proclamation which overcame both the difficulties; and it could well be said that he had not only originated the proposal for the formation of a permanent council of princes, worked out the detailed scheme and persuaded the

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1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's note on Chapter X (relating to the Indian States) of the joint report by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India, pp. 4-5, Appendix XXV.
2. Notes for the India Office Committee by H.H. the Maharaja of Bikaner, 1919.
3. Panikkar, His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, A Biography, pp. 227-28.

Government of India to recommend it but he had also the satisfaction of helping in the shaping of its final constitution.

It was thus as a result of constant and continuous efforts that the constitution of a Chamber of Princes was finally decided; and officially inaugurated by the Duke of Connaught, on behalf of the King in the Dewan-i-Am at the old fort at Delhi on the 8th February 1921. The Maharaja who had taken such pains to bring into existence the Chamber, and had been the General Secretary of the conference of ruling princes and chiefs, was elected its first Chancellor. In 1926, after holding office for five years, the Maharaja retired from the chancellorship of the Chamber of Princes.

It would be pertinent at this stage to describe in brief the relations of the Rajputana States with the Government of India, and the contribution made by Maharaja Ganga Singh to improve them. The question of the simplification of relations between the Government of India the princes of Rajputana was first mooted and examined by the Government of India in 1915. At the time, the Political Secretary to the Government of India ascertained the views of seven princes on the subject; but only three were in favour of a change, and the question was dropped at the time.[1] Later, it was again raised by the Maharaja in his note on Chapter X (relating to the Indian States) of the joint report by Lord Chelmsford and Mr. Montagu when he said that it would be in the interests of both of the imperial government and the princes to place the princes, or at least the bigger chiefs, in direct relation with the Government of India.[2] The

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1. Confidential circular letter dated Ajmer the 27th March, 1920 from Mr. R.E.Holland, Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana to the ruling princes of Rajputana, reproduced as Appendix II in Maharaja Ganga Singh's note of 1923 on the question of simplification of political relations between the Government and the Princes and States of Rajputana, p.116

2. Note on Chapter X (relating to the Indian States) of the Joint Report by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India, by Maharaja Ganga Singh, pp. 9-10.

point was acceded to in the recommendations of Montagu-Chelmsford Report published in 1918 wherein it was said that, as a general principle, all important States should be placed in direct political relations with the Government of India, as the practice of communicating with the Central Government through two or more intermediaries was an obstacle to good understanding and to speedy conduct of business.[1] The India Office Committee held in 1919 in England and which discussed the Montagu-Chelmsford Report, recommended that since the Government of India had accepted the policy of simplifying such relations, it was necessary for them to submit a scheme for the approval of the Secretary of State; but it was necessary to find the views of the princes before submitting the committee's proposals.[2] The Maharaja was for the abolition of the post of the Agent to the Governor-General and retaining the local political officers (Residents) accredited to the various groups of States, as the single media.[3] But Mr. R.E. Holland, the Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana, advocated the retention of the post of the Agent.[4] It, therefore, became necessary for the Maharaja to reply to Mr. Holland's letter in his individual capacity on the 6th May, 1920, and to make out a strong case in his note of 1923[5] to justify the stand taken by the princes of Rajputana.

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1. Confidential circular letter dated the 27th March, 1920 from Mr. R.E. Holland, Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana to the ruling princes of Rajputana, reproduced as Appendix II in Maharaja Ganga Singh's note of 1923 on the question of simplification of political relations between the Government and the princes and States of Rajputana, p. 116.
2. Maharaja Ganga Singh's note for the India Office Committee, 1919, pp. 15-16.
3. Maharaja Ganga Singh's note on the simplification of political relations between the British Government and the princes and States of Rajputana, p. 10
4. Mr. R.E.Holland's circular letter dated 20.3.1920 to the princes of Rajputana, pp. 118-26.
5. Maharaja Ganga Singh's note on the question of simplification of political relations between the British Government and the princes and States of Rajputana, p. 10.

The unstable conditions in British India in about 1926 had their repercussions on the States which were becoming involved in the political agitation. Interference by the Paramount Power in the affairs of the States and certain steps taken against individual rulers such as in the case of Maharana Fateh Singh of Udaipur, had tended to cause apprehension in the minds of the rulers. They felt that with every political advancement made in India, their treaty rights and privileges were suffering dimunition. Since Lord Irwin was at the time seriously working on the question of expediting reforms for British India, these princes, who had for long been striving to have their political relations with the British Government understood and appreciated in the correct perspective, now pressed their demand. The Viceroy in a speech delivered on the occasion of the opening of the meeting of the Chamber of Princes in November, 1926, therefore, suggested a frank and free discussion of the subject with their standing committee.[1] Maharaja Ganga Singh while Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes had mooted a similar proposal in 1922.[2] This was readily agreed to. The Viceroy called the rulers on the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes for discussion at Simla in May, 1927 where the princes reiterated their demand for the appointment of a committee to go into the question urgently. The demand was acceded to and the Viceroy was thanked for his sympathetic gesture in recommending to the Secretary of State for India the appointmentmeof the Indian States Committee, suggestion for which had initially been made by Maharaja Ganga Singh as Chancellor as far back as 1924.[3] It was thus that the Indian States Committee, popularly known as the Butler Committee was appointed.

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1. Viceroy's speech dated 22.11.1926 at the Chamber of Princes, Delhi - Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes, November,1926, p. 14
2. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 23.2.1928 at the Chamber of Princes, Delhi -Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes, February, 1928, p. 73
3. Ibid, pp. 72-73.

To put the case of the princes lucidly before the Butler Committee, it was necessary to collect facts and figures and decide the lines on which the case was to be presented. Maharaja Ganga Singh, therefore, called a meeting of the ministers of various States at Bikaner on the 16th August, 1926 when he stressed the responsibilities which had fallen on the princes, upon the satisfactory discharge of which alone depended the future of their States, and suggested the procedure to be adopted. He said that they were passing through very difficult times and that it had to be admitted that a particular section of political thought in the country was not in their favour. He pressed home the point that the times were changing and that they had to adapt themselves to the circumstnaces and added that while he realised that some of the States were really progressive, there was much need for reform in others and pleaded that nothing which duty and prudence dictated should be left undone.[1] In 1927 the Maharaja called a meeting of the princes

1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2278/XXVI, part III.C -Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 16.8.1926 at the meeting of the ministers called at Bikaner -
"No one who thinks seriously and earnestly, can shut his eyes to the fact that our future really depends largely, if not almost exclusively, upon the rulers of States themselves, upon the extent we, the princes, realise our great responsibilities and the sacred duty God Almighty has committed to our care, upon the manner in which we direct the affairs of our States, upon the amount of care and thought which we bring to bear upon questions of vital importance to the well-being of our States and our subjects. Very difficult times unmistakably lie ahead of us .... There is no use blinking at the fact that the trend of certain schools of political thought (in British India) is not in our favour. ....Times are changing, and the princes and States too have to adapt themselves to modern environments. Some of our States have every reason to be proud of their splendid achievements and of the high goal towards which they are so assiduously working. In some States on the other hand the need for reform will no doubt be apparent. It behoves us all -the princes and their ministers -to see to it that nothing which duty and prudence dictate is left unattended to. No doubt the future destiny of the princes and States of India will be determined by the will of God; but if we discharge our duties properly and are not unmindful of our responsibilities, He in His infinite mercy will assuredly extend to us His protecting hand and guidance."

to discuss the subject. In moving a resolution in the Chamber of Princes in February, 1928 welcomigg the appointment of the Butler Committee, Maharaja Ganga Singh said that the need of overhauling and keeping upto date the machinery governing the imperial relations with the States was obvious. He felt that howsoever difficult the problem might be, it was not one which could not be solved if tackled with sympathy, goodwill and honest and open statesmanship. He reiterated his firm belief regarding the responsibilities of the princes towards their States and people to which he had alluded to in his speech of the 16th August, 1926 at the meeting of the ministers at Bikaner. He added that the security and strength of a ruler and his State could not for all times "be in the bayonets of the British" but had to be permanently secured and maintained by his rule being broadbased on the loyalty, affection and contentment of his people[1]. He, therefore, suggested that it was of utmost importance that they put their houses in order. He touched upon the fiscal

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1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 23.2.1928 at the Chamber of Princes, Delhi - Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes, February,1928 , p. 78 -

   "..... Nor do Your Highnesses need to be reminded by me that the strength and the safety of a ruler and his State do not for all time lie in the bayonets of the British Government or of his own Army, but can only be permanently secured and maintained if his rule is broad-based on the loyalty and affection and the contentment and cooperation of his own people. Hence the imperative and urgent necessity, where required, of putting our houses in order. Many instances are forthcoming of the disastrous results -disastrous not only to the sovereign personally, but in my humble opinion disastrous in many ways to the State as well as to society - to the mightiest sovereigns of some of the greatest powers and empires on the face of this earth, who failing to detect the signs of the times rushed headlong to their doom or brought it on their descendants, thrrough unwise autocracy."

side of the issue and said that crippling the financial resources of the State and producing a deficit budget had adverse political effects. He observed that if the princes promoted the welfare of their people and observed the rule of law, there would be no occasion for the expression of hostility by any section of the people. On the contrary, they might find support from the Indian publicists. He, however, made it clear that the princes should not accept the views of any outside party as to what was good for their States.[1]

When the composition of the Butler Committee became known there was a general dissatisfaction as some of the princes and their ministers were not included in it. Some so-called friends advocated through the medium of the press that the princes would be well advised to boycott the committee, but the Maharaja strongly opposed the suggestion and said that it would "only be the height of folly and the very negation of all that counted for statesmanship" if they boycotted the Committee. He urged the princes to sieze the opportunity that came their way and to look forward with hope and faith.[2]

Observations were made at the time in the press and on the platform in British India that the princes had entered into a conspiracy with the British with a view to retarding constitutional progress in British India. The Maharaja most emphatically refuted these allegations and pointed out that on the contrary the princes as a body had made it very clear on many occasions that the constitutional and political advancement of their compatriots in British India was not only viewed with sympathy by them but they had even expressed their approval and support, and referred to his speeches made in London in 1917.[3]

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1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 23.2.1928 at the Chamber of Princes, Delhi -Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes, February, 1928, pp. 72-86
2. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 20.1.1928 proroguing the Bikaner Legislative Assembly - The Growth of Political Forces in India, p. 20
3. Ibid, pp. 21-22

The Committee came to Bikaner in February, 1928 when the States' case was discussed with them by the Maharaja and his Prime Minister, Sir Manubhai N.Mehta. In September, 1928 a number of ruling princes proceeded to England on behalf of the Chamber of Princes, to hold discussions with the Butler Committee but the Maharaja did not go. He deputed his Prime Minister instead.

Since the question of the Indian States was one which had a special bearing on the reforms to be granted to British India the British Indian leaders were not oblivious to the demands of the princes. The All Parties Conference which met at Lucknow provided a clause in its report that "the Commonwealth shall exercise the same rights in relation to and discharge the same obligations towards, the Indian States, arising out of the teaties or otherwise, as the Government of India has hitherto exercised and discharged." A report of the All Parties Conference popularly known as the Nehru Report was published by its leader and was expected to be accepted by the princes.[1] The Maharaja recognized correctly that there were "good men and true" in British India who would like to see that the States also secured a fair deal under the new set up. But the matter was one as could not be dealt with lightly without being properly examined in its legal and other aspects. The wording "hitherto exercised and discharged" seemed to set the clock back and negative the efforts that were being made by the princes to remove all the encroachments which had gradually gone against their treaty rights and privileges.[2] The Maharaja asserted that the charge that the States' proposals which had found place in Chapter X of the Montagu-Chelmsford Report were the result of the conspiracy of

1. Speech delivered by Maharaja Ganga Singh at a dinner given on the 9th September, 1928 on the eve of Sir Manubhai N.Mehta's departure for England -The Growth of Political Forces in India, p. 49.

2. Ibid, pp. 5051

the princes and the British, was malicious. During the course of their deliberations on the subject the princes had specially invited several prominent Indian leaders at their Patiala meeting and Lord Sinha, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Mr. Shrinivasa Sastri, Sir Ali Imam, Mr. N.M.Samarth and Mr. Chintamani were present at the meeting and some of them actually gave valuable suggestions.[1]

The report of the Bulter Committee which was published in April 1929 came as a shock to the princes. It conceded only one point that the treaty relationship of the States being with the Crown could not be transferred without the consent of the States to any other authority over which the Crown did not have full control. For the rest, the report was mainly a justification of the past and the present practice of the Government of India. Though Mr. Robert Erskine Holland, the then acting Political Secretary, had himself admitted that " a body of usage influencing the relations with the States had come into force through a process which though benevolent in intention, was to some extent arbitrary,"[2] theButler Committee was of the opinion

1. Speech delivered by Maharaja Ganga Singh at a dinner given on the 9th September, 1928 on the eve of Sir Manubhai Mehta's departure for England -The Growth of Political Forces in India, pp. 54-55.

2. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 27.2.1930 in the Chamber of Princes, Delhi - Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes, February, 1930, pp. 141-42 -

   "..... there had been in the past a constant development of constitutional doctrine under the strain of new conditions as the British Power had welded the country into a composite whole. That doctrine, as for instance in the case of (various matters) had been super-imposed upon the original relations of many States with the Crown, but had evolved in harmony with the needs of the Indian body politic and had not been inspired by any desire to limit the sovereign powers of the Indian rulers' consent to such new doctrine had not always been sought in the past partly because it was often evolved piecemeal from precedents affecting individual States, and partly because it would have been impracticable to secure combined assent within a reasonable period. It was admitted however, that while the justice and necessity of the new measures was clearly seen, their effect upon the treaty position was not appreciated at the time, with the result that a body of usage influencing the relations with the States had come into force through a process which, though benevolent in intention, was nevertheless to some extent arbitrary."

that "the usage lighted up the dark corners of treaties." The report further added that any attempt to define the operations or limit them was unnecessary and undesirable. To the demand of the Princes that Paramountcy should be carefully defined, it was said in the report that "Paramountcy must always remain Paramount."

Moving the resolution on the definition regarding the basis of intervention in the internal affairs of the States in February, 1930 in the session of the Chamber of Princes, Maharaja Ganga Singh lashed out against the position taken by the Butler Committee on the subject. He conceded that in consequence of the general protection granted by the Paramount Power against external aggression and internal rebellion, it had the right of intervention, he said that that was restricted to certain well-defined cases. He pointed out that this intervention at times was meant to showing off the power and authority of the Political Officers without any regard to the circumstances of the case. The crucial point, therefore, was the limitation of the right of intervention by the Paramount Power and of defining precisely where this could be done. The Maharaja explained that policies and political practices ~~or~~ changed with the Viceroy, the Political Secretary or even the Political Officers accredited to the Courts of the rulers. Instances were not lacking to show that a ruler suffered great humiliation, and great harm was done to his dignity and prestige. His entire career had been affected by it. The Maharaja emphatically pointed out that the recommendations made by the Committee went beyond those claimed by the Government of India. He said that when the provinces were clamouring for greater autonomy

and a gift of new rights, the princes expected the restoration of their original internal autonomy.[1]

The Maharaja was not very happy over the recommendations made by the Butler Committee. He ascribed these unsatisfactory results to the extremely difficult nature of the questions at issue and took the report only as the beginning of things. Further considerations might yield results equitable and fair to the States. He thought that the report had brought forward

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1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 27.2.1930 in the Chamber of Princes - Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes, February, 1930, pp. 123-29 -

" .....One of the most important things that is urgently called for is that the prince and his government concerned should have the fullest opportunities of making their representation on the subject; ..... policies and political practices are often liable to change with a change of the Viceroy or the political secretary, and in some cases even with a change of the political officers accredited to our Courts. And unfortunately sad cases have occurred in the past involving not only humiliation to the ruler concerned, but often -however benevolent the intention- grave injustice and irretrievable harm to the dignity and prestige and, indeed, the entire career of the ruler.

".....The Committee, moreover, have really propounded a new doctrine; they have suggested an extension of the scope of intervention beyond what the Government of India have themselves claimed so far. ..... These are really new principles and new claims. They are dangerous principles for they make intervention dependent upon circumstances over which a prince may have no control. ..... Surely our traditional institutions and usages cannot be exposed to changes demanded by uninformed caprice and clamour..... The provinces have been vociferously clamouring for greater provincial autonomy, more freedom from interference by the Central Government and less restrictions upon their own authority. They ask for a gift of new rights. The States ask for a restoration of their original status, of what actually belonged to them. If the British Indian Legislatures and provincial governments are to be invested with greater autonomy, so as to minimise intervention in their administration from the powers that be, the States have a greater justification in claiming a restoration of their original internal autonomy, so as sufficiently to safeguard it from encroachments in the near, or distant, future."

new theories about Paramountcy which were untenable in the context of the plighted word of the British Government and of the various imperial proclamations. He was of the belief that had the question been adjudged on a consideration of right versus wrong, regardless of past precedents, beneficial results might have accrued.[1]

Meanwhile a statutory commission known as the Simon Commission had been appointed and came to India to enquire as to what further constitutional advance could be recommended for India. In the light of all these developments, especially the British India demand for Dominion Status for India as a whole as envisaged in the Nehru Report, the findings of the Butler Committee and the appointment of the Simon Commission, the princes were naturally perturbed.

Lord Irwin, who was proceeding on leave to England, thought of availing himself of the opportunity to impress upon the Home Government the necessity of dealing with the Indian question on broader lines. The princes realised that the time was opportune for them also to meet the Viceroy and press home their demands. Accordingly the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes called a meeting of the representative princes in Bombay, at which Maharaja Ganga Singh was to preside. The meeting took place in June, 1929 and formulated the views of the princes and the States on the recommendations of the Butler Committee in a manner which left the Government of India in little doubt about the intentions of the princes.

The tone of the speeches in the Chamber had changed. Not only was the Government of India surprised, but the public in British India were also amazed. The strength of the opposition to the schemes of the Butler Committee was evident. A positive line was needed, and the position of the princes safeguarded.

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1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 27.2.1930 in the Chamber of Princes, Delhi -Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes, February, 1930, pp. 92-93.

Sir John Simon suggested to the British Prime Minister that any proposal regarding the final form of the Government of India in which the States were to be associated was possible only with the consent of the princes. When Lord Irwin returned to India in October, 1929, he conveyed His Majesty's desire to call a Round Table Conference in London so as to try and find a solution to the Indian problem by mutual discussion among all parties concerned.[1] The Maharaja welcomed the suggestion warmly and said that the princes fully realised their ties with their brethren in British India whose constitutional advance they all cherished. He also assured them that nothing was farther from their minds than to break up India into two discordant halves. He reiterated the princes' desire to extend full support and sympathy to their aspirations.[2]

The Round Table Conference was summoned to meet in November, 1930 in England and was inaugurated in the House of

1. Gazette of India Extraordinary dated the 31st October, 1929.
2. Interview given by Maharaja Ganga Singh to the Associated Press of India on 2.11.1929 -
"..... The princes realising full well that they are bound to their brethren in British India by ties of blood, race and religion, have no desire to hamper the attainment of Dominion status by British India or to be a drag on its constitutional advancement. Nothing is farther from their desire than to break up the country into two discordant halves warring against each other in fratricidal feuds; and they look forward to the unity of India as earnestly as their friends, the political leaders of British India. ....."

".....They have in the past repeatedly emphasized their sympathy with the legitimate aspirations of their fellow countrymen in British India, and they went a step farther at the Bombay Conference in June last when they cordially welcomed the goal of Dominion status by British India as an integral part of the British Empire. ..... I went on to state that the sympathy and support of the princes would be forthcoming in a very substantial and practical manner at such a conference."

Lords by the King Emperor on the 12th November, 1930. The object of the Conference was summed up by him in his opening speech: "to discuss the future system of government for India and seek agreement for the guidance of his Parliament as to the foundations upon which it must stand".[1] There were three parties to the Conference, British representatives, British Indian representatives and the representatives of the Indian States. The Indian States delegation consisted of the rulers of Alwar, Baroda, Bhopal, Bikaner, Dholpur, Kashmir, Nawanagar, Patiala, Rewa and Sangli, Sir Prabhashankar Pattani, Sir Manubhai Mehta, Sardar Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Khan, Nawab Sir Muhammad Akbar Hydari, Sir Mirza M. Ismail and Colonel K.N. Haksar.[2] The subsequent meetings of the Conference were held at St. James' Palace.

The British Indian delegates to the conference unfortunately formed an impression from Sir Leslie Scot's theory[3] that the representatives of the Indian States would stand against the claim of British India and join hands with the British Government in denying self-government and Dominion status to India. The situation was fraught with suspicion and danger. The British Indian delegates were suspicious of the attitude the Indian States might adopt. The position of the Indian States representatives was very embarrassing. If they allowed themselves to be played into becoming an impediment to the aspirations of British India, they were likely to be dubbed as being unpatriotic to the motherland. If they aligned themselves completely with the British Indian claims, they ran the risk of jeopardising

1. King Emperor's speech dated 12th November, 1930 inaugurating the Indian Round Table Conference -Proceedings of Plenary Sessions of the Round Table Conference, 1930-31, p.11

2. He was later on Prime Minister of the Bikaner State.

3. That the treaty relationship of the States, being with the Crown, could not be transferred without the consent of the States to any British Indian authority over which the Crown had not full control.

their own special position which depended upon the protection of the Crown. The task, therefore, of safeguarding the special position of the States and yet supporting the righteous claims of British India was by no means easy and it fell to Maharaja Ganga Singh's lot to do so. For many days till the holding of the Plenary Session of the conference, the Maharaja's residence at Carlton Hotel, was the scene of great activity. He invited the Indian leaders of all shades of opinion and held long discussions with them with a view to arriving at an agreed understanding of the problem.

On 17th November, 1930, at the Plenary Session of the conference, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru opened the case for India, and made out a strong case for the grant of freedom to India, "freedom within our own borders as integral part of the British Commonwealth of Nations" should be granted.[1] He made an appeal to the princes, whom he described as patriots first and princes afterwards, to come forward to form a united India, each part of which was to be autonomous, enjoying absolute independence within its borders and regulated by proper relations with the rest.[2] He welcomed the association of the princes for three reasons; firstly that they would create a stabilising factor in the constitution, secondly that the process of unification would begin at once and lastly because in matters of defence their experience would be a great asset.[3]

Speaking immediately afterwards, the Maharaja appealed to British statesmanship to rise to the occasion and not be daunted by any difficulties. Difficulties were after all, he said, not insurmountable, adding that it was "the very immensity of the work which makes it worth doing well." He pointed out that the ultimate attainment of Dominion status by India was inherent

1. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru's speech dated the 17th November, 1930 at the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference, London - Proceedings of the Plenary Sessions of the Round Table Conference, 1930-31, p. 23
2. Ibid, p. 24
3. Ibid, p. 25

in the declaration of 1917 which had been reiterated more recently. He emphasized that "no half-hearted measures, and no tinkering with the constitution" would meet the situation. At the same time he laid stress on the loyalty of the princes to the Crown and of their stand on treaty rights and everything they stood for.[1] He asserted that the princes were Indians and claimed that they were on the side of progress and were willing to take their part in and contribute to the greater prosperity and contentment of India as a whole.[2] He, therefore, welcomed the idea of federation with legitimate safeguards in the interests of the States and affirmed his faith in the greatness of India together with the greatness of the princes. He pointed out that the starting point must therefore be a recognition of this diversity. Unity must be sought in an associated diversity rather than impossible uniformity. He assured the assembly that the Indian princes were prepared to take part in, and make their contribution to, the greater prosperity and contentment of the motherland. He also affirmed his conviction that this could be done through a federal system of government composed of the States and the British India and added that, though the two partners were of different status - the States being already sovereign and autonomous while British India derived its authority by devolution, it should be possible to devise means to link the two together. He, however, cautioned that a period of transition

1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 17.11.1930 at the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference -Proceedings of the Round Table Conference, 1930-31, pp. 28-30.

2. Ibid, pp. 31-32 -
   " We, the princes, are Indians - we have our roots deep down in her historic past, we are racy of the soil. Everything that tends to the honour and prosperity of India has for us a vital concern. Everything which retards our own growth and lowers our stature. We claim that we are on the side of progress."(p. 31)
   "We of the Indian States are willing to take our part in and to make our contribution to, the greater prosperity and contentment of India as a whole. I am convinced that we can best make that contribution through a federal system of government composed of the States and British India."(p.32)

must necessarily intervene and that the partnership could not be coerced but should spring from free will and volition on terms which would secure the States their just rights.[1] Elucidating the stand taken by the princes, he pointed out that the basic recognition of the existence of their treaty rights was imperative, that they must be respected and should not be transferred unilaterally and without their consent. He demanded the establishment of a supreme court with full powers to entertain and adjudicate upon all matters of a justiciable nature with regard to the rights and obligations of the princes under the treaties. He further claimed that in questions relating to purely internal affairs of their States, their case should not go by default. To achieve it he advocated the formation of an Indian States Council to work with the Political Secretary and advise the Viceroy.[2] He ended by again emphasizing the loyalty of the princes to the Crown and their devotion to the Motherland.

Such a stand by the princes had not been anticipated; it came as a surprise. India was pleased and reactionaries in England amazed. Even the British Prime Minister said that the delaration of the princes in favour of federation had not only cheered their hearts but also simplified their duties.[3] And the

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1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 17.11.1930 at the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference; Proceedings of the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference,1930-31, pp. 31-32.
2. Ibid, pp. 33-34.
3. Sir Robert Erskine Holland in "The Politics of the Indian States, the Chamber of Princes and the Federal Idea" forming chapter XIV of Sir John Cumming's Political India 1832-1932, p. 266, says -
   "The declaration of the princes has revolutionized the situation..... has at once not only opened our vision not only cheered our hearts, not only let us lift up our eyes and see a glowing horizon, but has simplified our duties. The princes have given a most substantial contribution in opening up the way to a really united federated India."
   Also Proceedings of the Plenary Sessions of the Round Table Conference, 1930-31, p. 173.

Government of India stated that their secretariat had no proposals ready to meet such a situation. Even Mahatma Gandhi, when he attended the Session of the Round Table Conference in 1931, said: "I feel and I know, that they (the princes) have the interest of their subjects at heart. I know that they claim jealously to guard their interests ..... I wish them well; I wish them all prosperity; and I also pray that their prosperity and their welfare may be utilised for the advancement of their own dear people, their own subjects".[1]

The causes for such a change in the attitude of the princes are not far to seek. The stand taken by the enlightened princes and especially Maharaja Ganga Singh was certainly one of them. He had always visualised a united self-governing India in which the rights and prerogatives of the princes were secured. This momentous utterance completely changed the character of the Conference. The excuse put forward by the British against a responsible government at the Centre namely that of its responsibility towards the States and their relations with the princes at once became untenable. The idea of there being two Indias which could develop independently of each other had never found favour with him and as a patriotic Indian he had a profound faith in the greatness of his motherland and the integral unity of the States with India.

Federal responsibility having been decided in principle, a Committee known as the Federal Structure Committee[2] with Lord Sankey, the Lord Chancellor as its chairman, was appointed to work out the details. In the members selected from the Indian delegation to serve on this Committee were included Maharaja Ganga Singh, the Nawab of Bhopal, Sir Akbar Hydari and Sir Mirza Ismail. The Maharaja played a prominent part in putting the views of the States before the committee and the work done by him received the appreciation of Lord Sankey both in the

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1. Gandhi, The Indian States Problem, pp. 55-56
2. Also known as the Sankey Committee.

Committee and outside. He thanked him for it adding that his own work as the chairman of the Federal Structure committee would have been doubly difficult but for the Maharaja's assistance and advice.[1] The Secretary of State for India also expressed his appreciation of the Maharaja's splendid work at the conference and said that there was no one who could fail to recognise the conspicuous part played by him or be blind to the transcendent importance of the decision which he took, and induced his brother princes to take the path of federation as the true road for India to follow.[2]

The first Round Table Conference adjourned in January, 1931 to meet again in September. The delegates returned to India. The Maharaja was not happy that the premier political party, the Indian National Congress, should have refused to participate in the first Round Table Conference. The Congress leaders, some of whom, including Mahatma Gandhi, were his personal friends and for whom he had a great regard, were in jail. The Maharaja genuinely felt, along with some other Indian leaders, that without the participation of the Congress the outcome of the discussions of the Round Table Conference would not be fruitful. He, therefore, together with some of his British Indian friends, left no stone unturned to impress upon the Government the importance of seeking the participation of the Congress. In the end, these efforts succeeded; the Congress leaders were released, meeting took place between the

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1. Lord Sankey's letter dated 22.1.1931 to Maharaja Ganga Singh- Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes, March, 1931, Appendix J, p. 31-

   "I hope that when this letter reaches you, your own people in India will have given you the hearty welcome which you have earned so well.

   Please accept my sincere thanks for the great part which you have played at the Round Table Conference. From first to last you gave us all a splendid lead. My own task as chairman of the Federal Structure Committee would have been doubly difficult without the assistance and advice which ~~you~~ I owe to you....."

2. Letter dated 21.1.1931 from W.Wedgwood Benn, Secretary of State for India to Maharaja Ganga Singh -Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes, March 1931, Appendix I, p. 42.

Viceroy and Gandhiji and ultimately the Congress decided to participate in the deliberations, selecting Mahatma Gandhi as its sole representative. Even then many a hitch came in the way down to the time of Gandhiji's departure to England; but at every step the Maharaja did his best, by informal discussions with the Viceroy, Gandhiji and other personal friends of his in the Congress as well as others to ensure Congress participation in the Second Round Table Conference. Gandhiji paid a visit to Devi Bhawan, the residence of Maharaja Ganga Singh in Bombay, on the 10th June, 1931 and the two had a long heart to heart talk. During these talks the Maharaja offered to look after the passage arrangement for Gandhiji's visit to England and Gandhiji joculously called the Maharaja as the purveyor of Steamer passages. The passage was later actually arranged through the Maharaja's Household Department with special accommodation for Gandhiji's kitchen on the after-deck on "Mooltan."[1] During the meeting the Maharaja had urged upon Gandhiji the necessity of the Congress being represented at the Round Table Conference and of Gandhiji's presence there.[2] From a copy of the 'points for talk' with Gandhiji on this occasion, it appears that many other matters of mutual interest were also discussed.[3] On the 22nd July, 1931 the Maharaja wrote to Gandhiji expressing his pleasure at finding his name included amongst the new members of the Federal Structure Committee of the Round Table Conference.[4] And this was not a solitary meeting between the two who had met before also. This shows the regard the Maharaja had for Gandhiji and establishes beyond doubt the Maharaja's eagerness to help in the attainment of Independence by the country.

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 914/XXVIII- Maharaja Ganga Singh's letter dated 4.7.1931.
2. Ibid, dated 9.7.1931
3. Ibid, pp. 11-15
4. Ibid, dated 22.7.1931.

The second Round Table Conference commenced its work in September, 1931. The main task of constitution making was with the Federal Structure Committee which now also included Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya. Some differences had, in the meantime, arisen amongst the princes, and so while the Maharaja attended the second Round Table Conference and his contribution to the detailed discussions was very valuable, he thought it better not to take the same interest as in the first Round Table Conference. But he was not one to dispair, and on his return from England, he bent his energies to bring about unity amongst his brother princes. Jointly with Maharaja Bhupendra Singh of Patiala, he succeeded in achieving the desired unity at the Delhi Conference of princes and ministers in 1932. This conference defined the essential safeguards under which the princes would be prepared to join the federation.[1]

The main task having been achieved and principles adopted, it was not essential for the princes to take part in the third Round Table Conference. At the Joint Select Committee, important Ministers of the States and not the princes, visited England and among them was Sir Manubhai Mehta, the Prime Minister of Bikaner.

During the stage of negotiations, the Maharaja had taken special care to ensure adequate representation for the smaller States, and it was gratifying to note that the claim was met, as far as possible, while finally deciding the allocation of seats in the Federal Legislature.

The idea of federation, more particularly the evolution of some machinery whereby sustained and intimate cooperation between the two Indias, so necessary for the attainment of self-government, seems to have germinated as early as 1914 when that farsighted Viceroy Lord Hardinge recognised the possibility

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1. Resolution (Agendum No. 10) dated the 1st April, 1932 passed by the Chamber of Princes; Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes, March-April, 1932, pp.101, 57-74

of such a union. In January, 1914 Maharaja Ganga Singh had presented a minute to the Viceroy wherein he said that a federal Chamber representing all the States and, if necessary, the provinces of British India as well, represented through the respective governors and Lt. Governors, could be gradually developed.[1] Thus the idea of a sort of federation of British India and Indian India was mooted and Maharaja Ganga Singh's pronouncement received due applause both from the Viceroy and the Indian press. Lord Hardinge in his speech said that the ideas expressed by the Maharaja had his warmest sympathy.[2] The press commented that there was a tendency in some quarters to overlook the Indian States altogether and that it was forgotten that their rulers had an interest in the affairs of the country as a whole. It further said that the demand of the rulers for more frequent consultations between them and the Government in matters relating to their territories was only just and that it was likely that such consultations might be of value to the imperial government.[3] The ~~da~~ Times of India, dated 16th March, 1914, while reporting on the conference said that the pronouncement made by the Maharaja and subsequently endorsed by the Viceroy was remarkable. It added that the idea of a Council of Princes dated from Lord Lytton's day but had so far been put aside as being impracticable. It was not difficult to appreciate the validity of the objections then. The proposals now putforth by the Maharaja were modest as they did not desire any collaboration in the governance of India but only consultations in matters relating to them, their States and their people. The Maharaja said that none who appreciated the position would doubt the urgency of his words.

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1. Minute by Maharaja Ganga Singh dated 5.1.1914 on the representation of the States in the Government of India and the formation of a Council of Princes, p. 9
2. Lord Hardinge's speech dated 3.3.1914 in reply to Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech at the Chiefs' College Conference at Delhi -"I can assure you that the ideas therein expressed by His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, have my warmest sympathy."
3. Poineer, 11.3.1914.

The outbreak of World War I and the steadfast loyalty and devotion of the princes to the Crown and the country considerably affected the way of thinking in the British Government, and the adoption of the new policy of associating the princes with matters of government became more assured. Soon after the conclusion of the War, when Mr. Montagu came to India in 1917 to study the conditions and submit a report amongst the proposals that he made, he recommended "the provision for some means of deliberations between the Government of India and the princes on matters of common interest to both."[1] The idea was also mooted in the Conference of the princes and the ministers held in Bikaner in 1917.

There was, however, a section of opinion in British India which was aggrieved with the princes and thought that the Indian States and their princes were impediments in the way of reforms leading to independence. This view was held even by some prominent British officers like Sir Malcolm Hailey, Home Minister, Government of India.[2] The infiltration of ideas into the States from across British India was proving contagious specially in the conditions then prevailing in most of the States. A description of the situation was vividly given by Maharaja Ganga Singh while inaugurating the ministers' conference at Bikaner on the 16th August, 1916. He said that there was no gainsaying the fact that the future of the princes depended largely on themselves, on how they realised and discharged the duties in regard to the affairs of their States for the well-being of the States and their subjects. He warned them that times were changing and one could not be oblivious of the fact that the trend of certain schools of thought was not in their favour and that they had to adapt themselves to the new environments.[3]

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1. M.K. Raghubir Sinh; Indian States and the New Regime, pp.70-71
2. Ibid, p. 115.
3. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2278/XXVI, part III-C; Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 16.8.1926.

Conditions remained more or less static and the adoption of the ideal remained only the subject matter of discussion and received greater attention only when the question of further reforms for British India was considered and various committees and conferences began to discuss the future form of Government.

The proceedings of the All Parties Conference in which was manifested an "unmistakable spirit of hostility" and where "all the abuse and invective was hurled, without qualification and in such a sweeping manner" came as an eye-opener to the princes.[1] Besides, Maharaja Ganga Singh knowing full well, the notorious tendency of the federal centres to encroach upon the exclusive spheres of the units, was prudent enough to stress from the very beginning on the safeguards to be provided as conditions precedent for the entry of the States to any federation with the provinces. These conditions, as enunciated in a resolution passed by the Chamber of Princes in April, 1932, were that necessary safeguards should be embodied in the constitution, that the rights of the States arising from treaties, Sanads and Engagements remain inviolate, that the sovereignty of the States should remain intact and that the obligations of the Crown to the States remain unaltered.[2]

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2278/XXVI, part III-C; Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 8.9.1928 in honour of Sir Manubhai Mehta on the eve of his departure for England.

2. Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes, March-April, 1932 p. 101 -
   Agendum No: 10 - Resolution regarding the work of the Indian States Delegation to the Round Table Conference -
   "This Chamber declares that the States will join an all India federation on the assumption that the Crown will accept responsibility for securing to them the following guarantees:-
   (a) that the necessary safeguards will be embodied in the constitution;
   (b) that under the constitution, their rights arising from treaties or sanads or engagements remain inviolate and inviolable;
   (c) that the sovereignty and internal independence of the States remain intact and are preserved and fully respected and that the obligations of the Crown to the States remain unaltered."....."

Sir Manubhai Mehta and Nawab Sir Liaqat Hyat Khan were deputed by the States to elaborate upon the demands at the third sitting of the Round Table Conference in September, 1932 and secure them in the new scheme of federation. Sir Manubhai was representing Maharaja Ganga Singh and other princes as well. In the report which they presented on their return they summarised the pre-conditions as under:-

(1) All the essential safeguards deemed necessary for the maintenance of the integrity of the Indian States, their internal sovereignty and their full autonomy were secured in the new constitution;

(2) their claims regarding a weightage of fifty per cent in their representation in the Upper Legislative Chamber were satisfied;

(3) the States attending the Chamber of Princes in their own right secured individually one vote in the Federal Legislature, leaving a small margin for group representation of the remaining States;

(4) the treaty rights of the States were maintained intact without variation or alteration except with their own willing consent and that the Crown preserved its power to protect such treaty rights of the States;

(5) the sphere of federal subjects was so circumscribed as would not leave any power to any future federal legislature to enlarge by amendments in the constitution except with the free consent of the States; and that

(6) their rights to secede from the federation at any future time was recognized.[1]

They stated that of these, the demands in clauses 1, 4 and 5 may safely be treated as achieved, but no progress could be made in respect of the remaining three. However, they endorsed "the recommendations of the Ministers of the Delhi pact who unanimously recommended that the Indian States would be well advised if they joined the All India Federation.[2]

The White Paper relating to the proposed constitutional

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1. Confidential report dated 6.3.1933 of the Ministers deputed to London to secure conditions laid down by the Chamber of Princes in the new Scheme of federation, elaborated at the third Round Table Conference, pp. 2-3.

2. Ibid, pp. 3-5

reforms, which emanated after over a year's deliberations, was published in March, 1933. The princes felt that the scheme envisaged in the White Paper was greatly at variance with the one contemplated at the Round Table Conference and in view of the growing distrust amongst the princely order, the Viceroy felt it necessary to reassure them on the subject. In his opening speech at the March, 1933 Session of the Chamber of Princes he said that it must not be assumed that the proposals were complete in all respects and that a bill would not contain anything not considered by the White Paper and if the princes still desired to urge the inclusion of further points relating to safeguards and other issues, they could represent their view-point before the Joint Select Committee.[1]

A rift had been created, in the meanwhile, amongst the princely order more especially on the question of representation on the Federal Legislatures. On the other hand the British Government had strengthened its position and stiffened its attitude not only against the Indian National Congress but also in matters concerning the princes. The position taken up by the British government could not be better summed up than given by Lord Willingdon when he said that if the decisions regarding the form of federation were to be fair to all parties, they could not accept the view of any one particular section and that "His Majesty's Government were concerned only in obtaining a fair and reasonable settlement".[2] The result was the Government of India Act, 1935 and the revised draft Instrument of Accession. Forwarding this for acceptance, the Viceroy said that the terms indicated should be considered

1. Viceroy's speech dated 20.3.1933 at the Chamber of Princes; Proceedings of the Chamber of Princes, March, 1933, p. 3

2. Ibid, p. 4 -
"Firstly, if such decisions (regarding the form of federation) are to be fair to all parties, they can not accept the view of any particular interest or section, and, secondly, His Majesty's Government are concerned only in obtaining a fair and reasonable settlement."

as the farthest limit to which His Majesty's Government could go to meet the wishes of the States.[1] Since, however, Indian opinion had, in the meantime, changed rapidly, almost to a danger point, it became necessary for the States to review the position.

Maharaja Ganga Singh's views generally relating particularly to the accession of the Bikaner State, are clearly indicated in his reply to Lord Linlithgow's letter dated 27.1.1939. He held that adequate protection had not been afforded to the States in respect of their rights arising out of their treaties and agreements which they were not prepared to waive; that the list of federal subjects had been considerably enlarged and that the final proposals for the administration by the States of Federal Laws were not only basically different from those put forward at various stages of negotiations but were also different in effect.[2] Maharaja Ganga Singh further pointed out in this letter the growing disruptive tendencies at work in British India during the previous year and added that a federal constitution must necessarily imply harmony between the units and could only be based by each unit recognising complete internal autonomy of the other. He regretted, however, that such was not the case. On the contrary subversive movements had been encouraged from within some of the major provinces to operate in a manner which undermined the authority of the neighbouring States. Such a state of affairs, he said, could not be ignored as there was no guarantee that his own State would not be affected by them immediately or at some future date.[3]

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1. Lord Linlithgow's letter dated 27.1.1939 to Maharaja Ganga Singh -
   "....the terms now indicated must be regarded in all essentials as incapable of further relaxation since they represent the furthest point to which, after the fullest consideration of all issues involved, among which the securing of the welfare and interests of the States was prominently in their mind, His Majesty's Government have found it possible to go to meet the wishes or apprehensions expressed by ~~the~~ States."
2. Maharaja Ganga Singh's letter dated the 17th July, 1939 to Lord Linlithgow, para 10.
3. Ibid, paras. 12 and 13 - "I would also invite Your Excellency'

...contd. next page.

These conditions caused a change, at least for the time being in the outlook of the Maharaja, as also of the princely order in general. An expression of this is to be found in the above-mentioned letter to the Viceroy wherein the Maharaja said that though the legal structure of the federation was devised to provide complete internal autonomy to the units, it was apparent that this basic character could be set at naught and the safeguards nullified by some of the provincial governments acting on the pressure of the political parties in whose programme there was no place for the rulers and their States. He added that it was felt that this deliberate policy of encroachment on the States' rights had its root in the desire to coerce the rulers to align themselves with the policy of the political parties in British India. He argued therefore that entry into the federation under such conditions would be tantamount to encouraging the subversive movement whose objective was to wean away the people of the States from the loyalty they owed to their rulers. He pointed out that if he were to opt for federation it would mean his working in collaboration with people who had as their objective complete

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kind attention to a point of vital importance to the States in the consideration of any scheme of federal union with British India. I refer to the tendencies which have manifested themselves, particularly during the last year in British India especially the utter lack of the spirit of cooperation which the experience of the actual working of provincial autonomy has unfortunately disclosed. A federal constitution must necessarily postulate harmony between the Units- which Your Excellency has so much at heart- and can only be based on the recognition by each individual unit of the liberty and complete internal autonomy of the other units."

"Unfortunately, in India, during the last one year, some of the major provinces have displayed a definite spirit of hostility towards the States. Not only have they not given effect to the safeguards provided for in the constitution to secure respect for the internal autonomy of other units but definitely encouraged subversive movements from within their jurisdiction to operate in a manner tending to undermine the authority of neighbouring States' Governments. Though happily, my own State has so far escaped the effects of this hostile policy, I cannot, as Your Excellency will realise, shut my eyes to the facts elsewhere, particularly as there is no guarantee that they will not affect me and my State also at some future date."

independence and who were openly hostile to the British empire, something which was against his conviction. He, therefore, said that he had no option but to refrain from joining the federation.[1]

Yet his faith in the imperative need of ordered political growth was not shaken in the least and in the very next paragraph he affirmed his faith in the ordered political progress of India which the princes desired no less than the people of British India. It could only be achieved through some form of federation and that he hoped that the problem of India's political advance would yet be settled in a manner satisfactory to all.[2] The princes were frustrated in their attempts to bring about a harmonious political settlement in India and felt distressed at the hostile attitude of the British Indian political parties; but it was clear from the utterances of Maharaja Ganga Singh that the princes never gave up hopes that better conditions would prevail for the achievement of their cherished objective. Further more, Maharaja Ganga Singh, during his political career, on many occasions, reached great heights of foresight. While being a great fighter for the rights and privileges of the rulers of the Indian States, he was never wanting in patriotism. The Maharaja had the ability to read the writing on the walls. As far back as 1937, in a letter addressed by him to Col. D.M. Field, the Chief Minister of Jodhpur, the Maharaja pointed out in unequivocal terms that the responsibility of governing the States was soon going to fall on the shoulders of the agitators of the day and they alone would be able to deliver the goods. He, therefore, went on to say that it was desirable

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1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's letter dated 17.7.1939 to Lord Linlithgow, paras. 14-16.
2. Ibid, paragraph 17, Appendix XXVI.
3. Maharaja Ganga Singh's letter dated 21.2.1937 to Col. D.M. Field, Appendix XXVII.

that honest men out of these should be helped to survive so that when the day came, they were there to shoulder the responsibilities which, otherwise, might pass on to unscrupulous people. In so writing the Maharaja had the case of Shri Jai Narain Vyas in mind. Shri Jai Narain Vyas was at the time facing great financial hardships and his supporters had betrayed him. He was, therefore, it was learnt, thinking of taking to cinema as a means of livelihood. The Maharaja, therefore, urged upon Col. Field to see that Shri Jai Narain Vyas could live in Jodhpur and remain in contact with politics so that he may stand a chance of having a hand in the future governance of the State which was inevitably to pass into the hands of the then agitators. In this connection it may be stated that Shri Jai Narain was a bitter critic of the rulers of the Indian States and their system of administration in general and of Maharaja Ganga Singh in particular and yet the Maharaja had a soft heart for Shri Vyas. While this goes to show the Maharaja's magnanimity, it also goes to show that the country's interests were uppermost in the Maharaja's mind.

Though, therefore, it was sad that the reactionary and hostile tendencies of political parties in British India led to a natural distrust and misgiving in the minds of the princes and in order to safeguard not only their existence, a primary instinct, but also because of their frustration in not seeing their basic conception of federation being fulfilled, it would be apparent that he never gave up hopes of better conditions prevailing for the achievement of the cherished objective.

Our historical theme, though dealing with the relations between the House of Bikaner and the Central Powers, cannot be complete without glancing through the growing administrative reforms brought about by Maharaja Ganga Singh, particularly durin a period when reforms were not considered seriously in the Indian States. It shows the impact of the West on an enlightened prince.

Maharaja Ganga Singh had always believed in the stability and strength of a State being dependent upon the good government of its people and had stressed the point very often in his speeches.[1] He enunciated seven widely accepted principles: the

1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 20.1.1928 while proroguing the Bikaner Legislative Assembly. Also his speech dated 23.2.1928 at the Chamber of Princes.

ruler should have a well defined Privy Purse, life and property be secured, there should be the rule of law, stability of public services, efficiency and continuity of administration, and the government should tend to the general well-being and contentment of the people. These principles, which represented the ideal of modern kingship and are even today accepted as the guiding principles of a good government, he strived to follow and commended them to his brother princes. He lived upto his convictions and earned the gratitude of his subjects for providing them security and contentment.

During the reign of Maharaja Dungar Singh, all the important departments of the State had been organised, regular courts of law established, a responsible and efficient system of government established and the foundation for a sound system of education laid.[1] Sir Charles Bayley, the President of the Regency Council, had also during the Regency administration, further organised the system of judicial administration. Maharaja Ganga Singh when he assumed full powers as a young man of eighteen, found that these reforms were not enough and that there was scope for their betterment. He therefore set about the task in a determined and planned manner.

On the Maharaja's assuming full ruling powers in December, 1898, the Regency Council was converted into State Council, the vice President of the Regency Council became the Dewan, the first Dewan of Bikaner State being Amir Mohammad Khan. Mahakma Khas, the principal office of the State, was newly created. Though the Maharaja took certain departments such as the Army, Medical and Health, and the Public Works, the

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1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech while unveiling the statue of Maharaja Dungar Singh -
   "By the establishment of regular courts of law and the division of the State into districts and Tehsils; by the abolition of the old system of farming the land revenues and by the introduction of fixed principles of assessment; by a thorough reform of the customs; by the organisation of a regular police force, and various other reforms, he laid the foundations of a sound and enlightened administration.....
   ....."
   cf. Panikkar, His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, A Biography, p.

individual members incharge of their respective departments continued to exercise control over them. But it was soon realised that there was much to be desired in the way of improvement in the system as the powers of the members were ill-defined and the dual organisation of members of Council and Mahakma Khas gave rise to delays and confusion.

In 1902 the Mahakma Khas was converted into a Secretariat, the secretaries being directly responsible to the Maharaja, and the post of Dewan was abolished. The Council, however, continued but now chiefly as a judicial and consultative body and the Maharaja personally presided over its deliberations.[1]

In the same year the Maharaja introduced the system of a separate Privy Purse and well defined civil list. Five per cent of the ordinary State Revenues was fixed[2] as the amount of the Privy Purse and it is to his credit that he was one of the foremost ruling princes in India to do so in confirmity with his convictions of good government.

In 1905 a system of holding annual Land Revenue Conferences was introduced with a view to bringing personal touch and greater efficiency in administration. The Nazims (collectors) and Heads of Departments were invited to these conferences. It was, however, felt that more could be done for the happiness of the people as also for increasing the efficiency of administration by bringing them and the district authorities together. Accordingly in 1908, the Maharaja enlarged the Conference by adding some non-official members to it. Though the name of the conference suggests that it was connected with the revenue side only, the questions discussed at its meetings embraced the administration as a whole and led to many important changes and reforms to improve the condition of the various classes and communities of the Maharaja's subjects.[3]

1. Note dealing with the Salient Features of His Highness the Maharaja's administration of the Bikaner State, 1898-99 to 1930-31, p.15
2. Four Decades of Progress in Bikaner, p. 126.
3. Note dealing with the Salient Features of His Highness the Maharaja's administration of the Bikaner State, 1898-99 to 1930-31, p. 18.

With a view to effecting further decentralisation and establishing a judiciary unconnected with the Executive, the Maharaja in 1910 established a chief court presided over by a Chief Judge and assisted by two other judges. Bikaner can say with much pride that it was the first State in Rajputana to take such a step for the separation of judiciary from the executive.[1]

Amongst the various boons announced on the occasion of the celebrations of the Silver Jubilee of the Maharaja's reign in 1912, two are specially noteworthy. During the time of the Council of Regency, Urdu had come to be adopted as the official language, much to the resentment and inconvenience of the public whose mother tongue is Hindi. The Maharaja announced that Hindi would be re-introduced as the court language and this order which took complete effect from 1914 caused great relief to the public.[2] The other announcement which perhaps reflected the more advanced thought of the Maharaja was that relating to his intention to institute a Representative Assembly. In announcing his intention, the Maharaja said that it was his conviction that the ruler and the ruled had equal interests in the well-being of the State and that the ruled should be given a progressive voice and share in the government as they proved themselves fit for it. He praised the British Government for having set an example in this direction.[3] The Representative Assembly was inaugurated by the Maharaja on the 10th November, 1913. The institution of the Representative

1. Note dealing with the Salient Features of His Highness the Maharaja's administration of the Bikaner State, 1898-99 to 1930-31, [illegible] pp. 29-30.
2. Ibid, p. 17.
3. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2278/XXVI, part I-A - Speech of Maharaja Ganga Singh dated 24.9.1912 -
   " It is the duty of progressive nation and government and of every right-minded ruler or administrator to look not only to the present and to the past, but also to the future. One must march with the times and so initiate and organize one's administration and frame one's acts and measures, that

...contd. next page.

Assembly evoked great admiration.[1] At the time it consisted of thirty-five members comprising six members of the Council, ten

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they may be not only sufficient to meet present requirements, but capable of expansion, and thus fit to meet and cover all contingencies that may arise. No one can afford to lag behind or he will never reach the goal."

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"The most important announcement amongst the boons is that relating to the People's Representative Assembly. The reason for the same are already explained in the notification in the Gazette announcing the boons viz. my conviction that rulers and the ruled have an equal interest in the well-being of the State and that, therefore, as they prove themselves fit, the ruled have a right to have a progressive voice and share in the Government."

"To their great glory and honour, the British Government have set a noble example in this direction to the entire modern world. The end and aim of all Governments is, and ought to be, the good of the people, and that government justifies itself best which secures the greatest possible good of the greatest possible number of the people entrusted to its care..... I can say with all sincerity that I have in the past fourteen years consulted the leaders of the various communities whenever occasion demanded it and have not only freely consulted them, but have equally freely welcomed their candid opinions and honest criticisms. And needless to say I and the State Administration have paid all due consideration and regard to such opinions and criticisms."

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1. Bombay Chronicle, 7.11.1913.
"In several Native States there are legislative councils. In Hyderabad very little is heard of their council although it has been in existence for a long time. In Baroda there is a small legislative council with limited powers. Mysore has its Representative Assembly which is peculiarly an advisory body..... In Bikaner, however, the Council is being created with wide powers for initiative and control and practically insures the grant of continuation to the State subjects."

The Tribune, 14.11.1913 - "It is a very important event not only for the Bikaner State, but gradually for India, as marking the definite stages of democratic progress..... We welcome the wise and benevolent act of constitutional reform in Bikaner."

Times of Ceylon, Colombo, 12.11.1913- "H.H. the Maharaja of Bikaner opened the New Representative Assembly yesterday. The ceremonial was a brilliant one and the popular interest was marked."

elected members and nineteen nominated members. By 1937 the strength had risen to forty-five and consisted of six members of the Executive Council, twenty elected members and nineteen nominated members.[1] In 1917 the Representative Assembly was given the name of Legislative Assembly and also the number of its elected members was increased from ten to fifteen.[2]

In the same year further reforms giving greater powers and freedom to the municipalities were sanctioned. While replying to an address presented to the Maharaja by the municipalities of the State, he said that not only were the municipalities granted greater autonomy under the new system but also that the number of their elected members increased according to the size of the town. He added that they had been given practically independent control over their finances as also the power to raise funds to meet their requirements.[3] This was indeed a very important step towards the development of local self-government.

With the well-being of the agriculturists and others at heart and realising the need for diminishing rural indebtedness as also of promoting amongst them the habit of self-help and thrift, the Co-operative Societies Act was introduced and passed in the Legislative Assembly in 1920 and the first cooperative society started in the State. By the end of October, 1930 there were eighty-nine such societies with a membership of about 1942.[4] The Maharaja had thus in 1920 realised the importance of the role of cooperative societies in the rural economy of the State, a fact which is being so much stressed in the present times by the Government of India. The Maharaja had the satisfaction of seeing it work successfully.

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1. Four Decades of Progress in Bikaner, p. 74
2. Note dealing with the Salient Features of His Highness the Maharaja's administration of the Bikaner State, 1898-99 to 1930-31, p. 20
3. Ibid, p. 23.
4. Ibid, p. 37.

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In order to bring closer the agriculturist and the Government with a view to understanding properly their needs and aspirations, Maharaja Ganga Singh constituted in 1921 a Zamindars' Board. On the creation of Ganganagar as a separate administrative division, the number of Zamindars' Boards was increased to two in 1929 i.e. one each for Bikaner and Ganganagar divisions.[1]

In 1922 the Maharaja established a High Court by Royal Charter for the better dispensation of justice. The appointment, promotion and removal of the judges, however, was made dependent entirely on the discretion and pleasure of the Maharaja.[2]

In 1924, the members of the Executive Council were designated ministers. The Cabinet which had been formed during the first world War and consisted of three members only but which had by now come to include all the members of the Council was abolished.[3]

Being cognisant of the hardships imposed upon the survivors of State servants who died prematurely, and with the well-being of his subjects at heart, the Maharaja introduced in 1927-28 a Life Insurance and Endowment Assurance Scheme for the employees,and also started a Savings Bank as important means of savings..[4]

Under the village Panchayat Act No: III of 1928, the Panchayats were invested with definite civil, criminal and executive powers.[5] It is interesting to note that this, our present ideal, ~~which~~ Maharaja Ganga Singh introduced so early in his reign.

Thus, from the time of the assumption of full powers, the Maharaja had striven successfully in modernising the State and

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1. Note dealing with the Salient Features of His Highness the Maharaja's administration of the Bikaner State, 1898-99 to 1930-31, p. 24.
2. Ibid, p. 30
3. Ibid, p. 16
4. Ibid, pp. 45-46
5. Four Decades of Progress in Bikaner, p. 77

progressively associating the public in the government of the State. The noteworthy point is that this was done by the Maharaja of his free will and not in response to any public demand as in British India and shows how zealously he tried to live upto the ideals of Indian kingship which, according to him, were no different from any in advanced countries. He, however, believed that in order that the people might be able to discharge the responsibilities imposed upon them efficiently, it was imperative that they received the benefits of education. Education, therefore, besides medical relief and public health were some of his great concerns.

The spread of education was certainly a difficult problem in the sandy tracts of Bikaner where the villages are scattered and situated far apart. To him, however, there was no difficulty which was insurmountable and with his motto that at any cost, defeat should not be accepted, he established a net-work of educational institutions. By 1943 there were 141 Government schools, 137 government-aided schools and 191 private unrecognised schools and one full-fledged degree college.[1] Not only this but Maharaja Ganga Singh was very closely associated with the Benaras Hindu University which he had always been helping with donations from time to time. The Maharaja was the vice-Chancellor of the University from 1922 to 1928, Chancellor from 1929 till almost the time of his demise in 1943. In 1942 when the University was closed down as a result of acts of indiscipline and sabotage by its students during the freedom movement and there was no hope of its being re-opened soon, it was the efforts of Maharaja Ganga Singh which resulted in the restarting of the University after

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1. Report on the Administration of the Bikaner State, 1942-43, p. 102.

lengthy correspondence between him, Lord Linlithgow, Sir Maurice Hallet (Governor of U.P.) and Dr.S.Radhakrishnan (Vice Chancellor, Benaras Hindu University).[1] The Maharaja's relations with Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya were of the best and I remember vividly, as a little boy, when we were called to the presence of the great leader and asked to touch his feet for his blessings, the kindness that emanated from him.

Provision for free medical relief to his subjects was the Maharaja's constant care. By 1943 the State could boast not only of having in its capital one of the finest and best equipped hospitals known as the Prince Bijey Singhji Memorial Hospital for men and Women in Rajasthan and northern India, but also establishing 46 State-run hospitals as against 14 in 1897-98.[2]

No one knew better than the Maharaja that these amenities and reforms could only be made lasting by a simultaneous growth of the State economically and soundness of its finances. Organising a proper system of land revenue, which would also be in the interest of the cultivator, was therefore, the first requisite step. The first regular settlement of the State was carried out in 1892-93 by Sir Patrick Fagan. The term of the settlement was ten years but owing to the famine of 1899-1900, a revision was postponed for six years. Accordingly settlement and survey operations were got in hand in 1909 and completed in 1911, which resulted in an income of Rs.904455/-. In 1912 the Maharaja obtained the services of Mr. G.D.Rudkin, I.C.S., from the Punjab Government to further examine the question before he finally passed orders on it. Mr. Rudkin had

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. LVI -Lord Linlithgow's letter dated 30.10.1942 to Maharaja Ganga Singh -
   "I entirely agree with you as to the desirability of getting these young men back to work as soon as possible, and I understand from Sir Maurice Hallet's letter of which I enclose a copy that, on the understandings stated therein, he has approved the programme suggested by the Vice-Chancellor, whereby all classes will be reopened before the 11th November..... I am, I need not say, very grateful to Your Highness for the interest and trouble you have taken in this matter. They have been of the very greatest assistance to Sir Maurice Hallet and myself in dealing with a difficult problem.

a general revision of the settlement done and assessment rates were adopted without any major changes. The land revenue system was thoroughly reorganised, occupancy and proprietory rights granted, and a proper grouping done of several sources of revenue such as adoption and succession fees, escheats to the State, fees on sale of immovable property etc.[1]

Another important source of income to the State was from Customs & Excise. In order to reorganise the departments and codify the rules, the Maharaja obtained, on loan in 1910, the services of Mr. J.H.Cox, C.I.E., O.B.E., from the Punjab Government. As a result of his recommendations, the two departments were amalgamated and the Excise Act and Manual and the Customs Act, Manual and Tariff introduced in 1911. The Acts and Tariffs were also revised subsequently as need arose and in view of the International Opium Convention of 1912. As a result the revenues under this head which had been Rs. 8,82,423/- during the Regency administration, increased to Rs. 20,95,295/- in 1926-27.[2]

Provision for safe, cheap and adequate facilities for transport and communications is not only a desirable public amenity but also forms an important link in the development of commerce and industry leading to the economic growth of any State. The Maharaja's quick and intelligent perception coupled with his ever-persistent desire for the welfare of his people made him give due consideration to these subjects. However, the inhospitable terrain of the country which is dotted with sand dunes percludes the economical construction of long distance roads. Any metalled road across the desert is soon made impassable by desert storms which deposit large quantities of sand. However, the road mileage increased to about 135 in 1943 from 26.13 at the time of the Maharaja's assumption of full powers.[3]

1. Note dealing with the Salient Features of His Highness the Maharaja's administration of the Bikaner State, 1898-99 to 1930-31, pp. 31-36
2. Ibid, pp. 38-39
3. Four Decades of Progress in Bikaner, p. 108

Railways, therefore, provided the only means of long distance communications. An agreement had, during the time of the minority of the Maharaja, been entered into in 1889 between the Government of India and the Bikaner and Jodhpur States for the construction of a railway line from Jodhpur to Bikaner[1], and the line from the Marwar frontier to Bikaner opened in 1891. By 1898 a further extension of 42 miles was made from Bikaner towards Bhatinda upto Dulmera making the total mileage of 89.75. In 1899 the Maharaja had, by an agreement entered into on the 15th December, to cede to the British Government full and exclusive power and jurisdiction over all land occupied or might be occupied thereafter by the railways in the State.[2] The Bikaner-Bhatinda section was completed and opened in 1902.

This line marked an important development in the growth of commerce as it provided a direct and shorter link between Bombay and the Punjab. The Degana-Hissar line though projected in 1902 could only be taken in hand in 1907 owing to difficulties in obtaining necessary sanction. It was completed and opened in 1911. Other important lines which opened up the interior are the Bikaner-Ratangarh chord, the Ratangarh-Sardarshahr line, Canal Loop line and the Hanumangarh-Sadulpur chord. Another important line which connects Sadulpur to Rewari, was planned in 1930, but sanction was received only in 1937 and the work completed in 1940. By 1943 at the time of the death of the Maharaja the total railway mileage was 883.05 with a gross yearly income of Rs.7176314/-.[3] Even in 1936-37 the State had 34.13 miles of railways per thousand square miles of the area; and with the exception of Baroda, Bikaner was the first among the Indian States in the matter of development of railway communications.[4] When the State merged, the rolling stock

1. Aitchison, Op.cit. Vol. III, pp. 296-96
2. Ibid, p. 301.
3. Report on the Administration of the Bikaner State for the 1942-43, pp. 96-97
4. Four Decades of Progress in Bikaner, p. 103

of a total capital value of about nine crores of rupees was handed over to the Northern Railway.

The extensive tract comprising a considerable part of the former Bikaner State lies in the middle of the desert and is perhaps the driest portion of India. The average rainfall is 12 inches and in certain areas even less. There are no rivers and whatever water sources there are, are few and far between. It had been the ambition of the rulers of Bikaner in the past to provide adequate supply of water. To find sources of potable water to mitigate the sufferings of the people, and to bring as large an area of the territory as possible under irrigation, and thus to make the State self-sufficient and prosperous, was their chief concern.

The idea of extending irrigation to Bikaner from the Sutlej river was first put forward by Col. Dyas, the Punjab Engineer, in 1885 but no practical steps were taken then.[1] During the reign of Maharaja Dungar Singh efforts were made in 1884 for the extension of the Abohar Canal into the Bikaner territory,[2] but the Punjab Government turned down the proposal on the plea that the canal had already been completed and that only surplus water could be released through the canal; but it was seldom available.[3]

The question was again raised by the Bikaner State Government by taking it up with the Political Agent in 1887,[4] but the reply was that the canals which had already been constructed could only provide sufficient water for British territory and that there was no hope of water being given.[5]

1. Four Decades of Progress in Bikaner, p. 92.
2. Kaifiat dated 20.11.1884 from the State Council to the Political Agent as quoted by Shri Nathu Ram Khangawat, Director of Archives, Govt of Rajasthan, in his draft memorandum on the defence to be organised by the Government of Rajasthan against the claim advanced by the Akali party for the annexation of the Ganganagar district to the proposed Punjabi speaking State, Appendix G.
3. Political Agent's reply dated 14.3.1885, ibid.
4. Letter dated 1.3.1887 from the Council to the Political Agent, Ibid.
5. Political Agent's letter dated 21.5.1887 to the Council, ibid.

These efforts continued even during the period of the Regency Council but without any results. It was only after the horrible famines of 1898-99 and 1899-1900 and the untold misery that it brought in its wake that the Central Government authorities realised the gravity of the situation[1] and the importance of the fact that irrigation schemes, which so far had been guided by narrow considerations of regional or provincial well-being, should be governed by a consideration of the greatest good to the greatest number and a general scheme evolved for the utilisation of the water of the rivers of India to that end.[2]

In 1903 Maharaja Ganga Singh secured the services of Mr. A.W.E. Standley as Chief Engineer and he demonstrated the feasibility of great portion of land lying waste in the Bikaner area being irrigated from the Sutlej. These proposals were also strongly supported by Sir Swinton Jacob, the then Consulting Irrigation Engineer for Rajputana.[3]

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1. Lord Curzon appointed in 1901 a committee presided over by Sir Colin Scott Moncrieff to go into the irrigation branch of the famine question. The committee submitted its report in 1903.

2. " I would most strongly urge that the possession of river frontage should not be admitted as giving any claim whatever per se to any water supply and certainly not to an additional supply from the river"- Sir Lewis Tuper, Financial Commissioner, Government of Punjab's note dated 24.10.1905 on the question of alloting a portion of Sutlej waters to Bikaner as reproduced in para 14 of the Report on the Representation of the Council of Regency, Bhawalpur State (Sutlej Valley Canal Project).

   Also Sir Denziel Ibbetson's letter dated 19.10.1906 to Maharaja Ganga Singh -

   " As for the Canal, my principle is that the water should be used to the best advantage of the people of India, without regard to the accident of their being subjects of an Indian chief or in British territory."

3. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 5.12.1925 at ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the Gang Canal.

The Government of India was also moving in the matter and Mr. R.G.Kennedy drew up the first Sutlej Valley Project in 1905 according to which, a considerable area in the North of the Bikaner State was to come under irrigation.[1] But the selfish policy of the Bhawalpur State (whose ruler at the time was a minor) was a great obstacle to the acceptance of the scheme. Though a decision was taken in 1906, a scheme was sanctioned only in 1912. The main objection raised by the Bhawalpur State was that Bikaner had no riparian rights as it had no frontage on the river, and it was not entitled to a share in the waters of the river.[2] The objection was based on the analogy of the riparian law as it existed in England and America. The objection was refuted by the Bikaner Government in their letter of 2nd February, 1916 to the Resident, Western Rajputana States.[3]

The attitude of the Punjab Government, in the meantime, had also become unsympathetic and that of Bhawalpur stiffened further and no agreement could be signed; and then the First World War intervened. Undaunted by obstacles the Maharaja continued to pursue the matter persistently. It must be said that as a result of these persistent efforts and Maharaja Ganga Singh's relations with the Central Government, he was able to impress upon the Government of India the justness of the claim of the Bikaner State and in 1918 Mr. Holland, the then Political Secretary wrote to the Maharaja that the surplus water available should be utilised without any regard to the boundaries between British and Indian State territories in the best interest of all possible participants. He added that the Government saw no reason why Bikaner should be excluded

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1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 5.12.1925 at ceremony of laying the foundation stone of the Gang Canal.

2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2696 A/LIV (2247) -Representation on the Sutlej Canal project, 1916, p. 9.

3. Appendix XXVIII.

from the benefits of the irrigation scheme merely on the ground that it was a non-riparian State. It was of the view that it was essential that the water supplied by a river should be distributed between the British subjects and the subjects of neighbouring States in such a manner as might appear best to serve public interest.[1]

In connection with a tripartite conference called to discuss the technical aspects of the proposed scheme, Maharaja Ganga Singh expressed his apprehensions. To him it seemed that the conference was being called to discuss technical questions only, and that Bhawalpur had every intention of keeping the political question open.[2] The Maharaja received the assurance that there was no question of discussing the political aspect of the case and that he would certainly veto the importation of such a discussion. He further stated that he had no intention whatever of departing from the basic principle accepted at the 1918 conference and that the discussion with Sir John Benton on the technical details would in no way alter the situation in regard to its political aspect. He added that he was himself not very hopeful that the points of difference in technical details would be reduced materially but since the Punjab had suggested a meeting, he thought it best that it should take place. He further expressed the hope that within the next fortnight he should be in a position to suggest an advance in

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No:866/L IV(2235)- Memorandum received under Sir Robert Erskine Holland's letter No: 1853 IB, dated 17.101918, p. 4

2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No: 866/L IV(2236)- Maharaja Ganga Singh's letter dated 23.10.1919 to Sir Claude Hill, Member of the Council -
"Ordinarily we would be only too glad to join such a conference, but it seems to be fairly evident that it is being called to discuss technical questions. Bhawalpur have every intention of keeping the political argument open as though they had agreed to nothing last year and in fact in their reply to the invitation have laid it down, but apparently as a condition of their attendance, that it will not prejudice the points other than technical dwelt in their last representation, to which they add, they strongly adhere for the final settlement of the full case."

the matter.[1] It was only on the 4th September, 1920, that an agreement could be reached and signed and the scheme sent up to the Secretary of State for sanction. However, vast changes had been made from the original scheme of 1905 according to which eighteen lakh acres in the Bikaner territory would have come under irrigation but now it covered only about one thousand square miles. It was a vast project involving the construction of an eighty mile-long concrete lined canal, a 157 mile length of railway line and the establishment of mandis, schools, hospitals, police stations and other offices. The estimated cost was about Rs.5.50 crores, the financing of which was no small problem.

The project was completed in 1927 and the opening ceremony of the canal was performed by Lord Irwin on the 26th October, 1927 in the presence of a large and distinguished gathering. It was indeed a great day for Maharaja Ganga Singh to see the fulfilment of one of his most cherished ambitions. Concluding the speech on the occasion, Lord Irwin had said -

> ".....I offer you our most heartfelt congratulations on the consummation of this great achievement....."[2]

In a cablegram received from King George V on the occasion, the message said -

> ".....I heartily congratulate you on this memorable achievement and on the success of the efforts which have surmounted all difficulties to ensure the benefits of irrigation to a portion of your territory....."[3]

Yet the fruition of the Gang Canal scheme was only the fulfilment of a part of the Maharaja's dreams. He cherished and strove to see yet other and larger parts of the State territory being brought under irrigation under what is known as the Bhakra Dam Project. Though the proposal was first dealt with by Mr. H.W.Nicholson in 1919, nothing tangible had come out till 192

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No: 866/L IV(2236)- letter dated 29.10.1919 from Sir Claude Hill to the Maharaja.
2. Speech of Lord Irwin at Shivpur (Bikaner State) on 26.10.1927
3. Panikkar; His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, A Biography, p. 298.

How dear the cause was to the Maharaja, can be judged by the fact that even on the very day the opening ceremony of the Gang Canal was performed by Lord Irwin, the Maharaja did not fail to remind him of his hope of the Bhakra Dam Project, which was on the waiting list of the irrigation projects of the Punjab Government, to be sanctioned and taken in hand during Lord Irwin's tenure of office.[1] The Maharaja took up the question with the Punjab Government and the Central Government. On the 20th March, 1929 he addressed a personal letter to the Governor of the Punjab to ask him when the project was likely to be taken in hand.[2] The Governor replied that the Bombay Government had raised a hitch and that he was having the point examined.[3] The Maharaja asked his Prime Minister to get in touch with the officers concerned with the project to be able to take necessary steps. The Prime Minister immediately got in touch with the Deputy Commissioner, Ambala, and received very valuable information. In 1930 he again sent a private telegram to the governor of the Punjab about his anxiety to know how the matter stood,[4] who replied that they were still having difficulties with the Bombay government and that a troublesome controversy had arisen with Patiala.[5] Again in 1931 the governor apprised the Maharaja of the position, and said that certain rough proposals had been drawn up and forwarded to the various States concerned for their examination.

In a meeting held at Lahore on the 30th November, 1932 the Punjab and the representatives of the various States,[6] the Patiala, Faridkot and Nabha representatives advocated the restriction of the benefits of the project to the Punjab States only.[7]

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1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 26.10.1927 at Shivpur.
2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2696 A/L IV(2247), Maharaja Ganga Singh's letter dated 20.3.1929.
3. Ibid, Governor of Punjab's letter dated 23.3.1929.
4. Maharaja Ganga Singh's telegram dated 18.7.1930 to the Governor of the Punjab, Sir Geoffrey deMontmorency.
5. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No; 2696 A/L IV; Governor of the Punjab's letter dated 18.7.1930 to Maharaja Ganga Singh.
6. Patiala, Nabha, Jind, Faridkot and Bilaspur.
7. Proceeding of the meeting item 2.

The dam was to submerge a large area of the Bilaspur territory, but negotiations to acquire the land were not easy of solution. Though it was a matter primarily between the Punjab Government and the Bilaspur State, Maharaja Ganga Singh availed himself of the opportunity of sounding the ruler of Bilaspur and communicated his observations to Sir Sikander Hyat Khan (Prime Minister, Punjab)[1] who wrote back to say that the Punjab Government officers who were being sent to Bilaspur for negotiations had been apprised of the issue and given instructions identical with the Maharaja's suggestions.[2] As a result of voluminous correspondence, personal discussions and approaches, the Maharaja succeeded in a note being made on the file by Sir Sikander that the Bikaner State should get its due share of water from the project when it was completed. It was sad that the Maharaja was not spared to see his labours bear fruit.

The result of all these developments was that the ordinary State receipts which in 1897-98, the year of the Maharaja's assuming full ruling powers, were Rs.16,15,319, gradually rose to Rs.1,35,19,021 in 1936-37. All the loans that had been raised by the State for financing the major railway and canal projects had been fully paid by 1936-37.[3] Throughout the entire period, from 1897 to 1936-37, the budget showed a surplus, except in 1899-1900, a famine year, and 1920-21 and 1921-22. The surplus for 1936-37 was Rs. 34,48,000/-.[4]

In 1938, when the Germans presented their demands to

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2696 A/LIV (2247), Maharaja Ganga Singh's letter dated 8.12.1938 to Sir Sikander Hyat Khan.
2. Ibid, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan's letter dated 11.12.1938 to Maharaja Ganga Singh.
3. Four Decades of Progress in Bikaner, pp. 122-25
4. Ibid, p. 120.

Czechoslovakia, and the situation in Europe became surcharged with tension, the Maharaja with the intuition of a soldier and the insight of a statesman was quick enough to recognize the dark clouds looming large in the horizon. He immediately cabled to the King Emperor placing unreservedly at his disposal his own sword, the services of his army and the entire resources of the State.[1] The Maharaja also sent a telegram to the Viceroy to offer the same services and help. The offer was greatly appreciated by the King[2] and the Viceroy.[3] Maharaja Sadul Singh, then heir-apparent, also offered to place at the disposal of the king his sword and personal services.[4] By August, 1939, war with Germany became imminent and the Maharaja was the first among the ruling princes of India to cable on the 26th of the month to the King, and to telegraph the Viceroy repeating his offer of previous September.[5] The offer was again appreciated by the King and the Viceroy.

The war was declared on the 3rd September, 1939 and on the 4th[6], the Maharaja again cabled to the King reiterating the offer and it was thankfully acknowledged by the King in his cablegram of the 5th September, 1939.[7] Heir-apparent, Sadul Singh had also offered on the 2nd September, to place his own sword and services at the disposal of the King but the British Government did not find it possible to accept the offer.[8] By a

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1. Maharaja Ganga Singh's cablegram dated 16.9.1938 to the King-Emperor.
2. King Emperor's cablegram dated 17.9.1938 - "I am very grateful for your kind telegram of yesterday and assure you that I greatly appreciate the sentiments of loyalty and devotion to which you have given expression at this anxious time."
3. Viceroy's telegram dated 17.9.1938.
4. Bikaner and the War(1939-45), p. 2
5. Ibid, p. 3
6. Ibid, p. 3
7. Ibid, p. 4 - "I thank you warmly for your message which has given me the greatest satisfaction. I can assure you that I appreciate very deeply the sentiments of loyalty and devotion which have prompted your valuable offer of assistance at this critical time."
8. Bikaner and the War (1939-45), p. 5

telegram dated the 6th September, to the Viceroy the Maharaja placed at the disposal of the King a sum of Rs.1,50,000/- and £1000/- to be devoted to war purposes.[1] The gift was gratefully acknowledged by the Viceroy who informed the Maharaja that he was communicating the offer of assistance to the Secretary of State.[2]

The Maharaja further offered to raise the strength of the Bikaner camel corps by three companies thereby practically doubling its fighting strength, to raise a second Infantry battalion which would be available for service in India, to raise five Infantry battalions for the army, to manufacture munitions in the Bikaner railway workshop, to accommodate upto 400 wounded personnel in War Hospitals specially established for the purpose and to supply transport animals.[3] While gratefully accepting the offer the Viceroy said that the most useful work that the Maharaja could do was to supervise personally the carrying out of the proposals for the enlargement of the Bikaner State forces.[4]

Now was the time for action, and the Maharaja took active part in the war effort. The Ganga Risala left Bikaner on the 17th August, 1940 for service abroad in the Middle East and returned to India at the end of December, 1942;[5] and the work done by the Risala received praise from all quarters. Lord Wavell wrote to the Maharaja that the Ganga Risala had done excellent work and had worthily maintained the high traditions of Bikaner.[6] Air Vice Marshall Ried wrote to the Maharaja to

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1. Rs. 1,00,000/- were contributed by the State, Rs.50,000/- from Privy Purse and £1000/- by Her late Highness Dadiji Shri Bhatianiji Sahib.
2. Viceroy's telegram dated 9.9.1939.
3. Maharaja Ganga Singh's telegram dated 15.9.1939 to the Viceroy as also his letter of 15/18-9-1939.
4. Viceroy's letter dated 20.6.1940.
5. Bikaner and the War,(1939-45), pp. 14 and 16.
6. Lord Wavell's letter dated 13.8.1941 to the Maharaja.

express his appreciation of the fine work the Risala had done under him and his admiration for its bearing and discipline.[1]

On return to India the Ganga Risala served in Sind till the end of June,1944 and returned to Bikaner in December,1945. Durin this period the unit was engaged in suppressing the Hur disturbances and anti-locust operations.Here also the work of the unit was acknowledged with grateful thanks and the Governor of Sind sent to its commanding officer a plate on which were inscribed the appreciations of the Khairpur Darbar as well as himself.[2] The

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1. Air Vice Marshall G.R.M. Reid's letter dated 24.6.1941 to the Maharaja -

"On the occasion of relinquishing my appointment as Air Officer Commanding, British Forces in Aden, I particularly wish to write to Your Highness in appreciation of Your famous Regiment, the Ganga Risala, and to compliment them upon the fine work they have done whilst under my command.

I have often heard of the great support always given to the Crown by Your Highness and all your subjects. I therefore feel that you may care to have news of the work of what must be one of the best known of all States' Forces units. I may sincerely say that it has been a great pleasure to have them in Aden where, although opportunities for adding to their battle honours have been wanting, yet their bearing and discipline have made them the subject of admiration. I can assure you that the Regiment has ably maintained its traditions in this its fourth period of service overseas.

It is with real regret that I now say good-bye to Lt. Col. Khem Singhji and all ranks of the Ganga Risala."

2. The Governor's letter dated 17.6.1944 to Maharaja Sadul Singh -

"Now that the Bikaner Ganga Risala has left Sind, I shoul like to place on record my own appreciation and that of my Government, of the very valuable services which the Corps has rendered to Sind during the recent Hur disturbances.

x x x x

I am sending to Colonel Khem Singh a small piece of plate on which my appreciation and that of the Khairpur Darbar is duly recorded, and I hope the corps will accept this as a memento of their service in Sind....."

Officer commanding, Headquarters, Northern Command also wrote to the officer commanding Ganga Risala on the 25th November 1944 extolling the excellent work done by the Regiment.[1]

Another unit, the Sadul Light Infantry, left Bikaner for service abroad on the 18th November, 1940. The strength of the unit, prior to its departure for overseas had been increased to four companies from three and mechanised at a cost 4½ lakhs of rupees. The unit was first employed in guarding base installations and protecting oil fields and later in keeping open the supply-routes to Russia. The unit returned to India in December, 1945.[2]

The Bikaner Bijey Battery reorganised on the lines of the Indian States Forces Mountain Battery, left Bikaner on the 8th September, 1941 for service abroad with the King's forces. It played an important part in Arakan in supporting the Infantry units. During the attack by one of the Japanese divisions on the Allied troops, it inflicted heavy casualities on the enemy and checked its advance. Again during the Japanese advance on Manipur, the Battery was rushed by air and along with the 5th Division was responsible for inflicting heavy defeat on the enemy. Its work received great appreciation, and Lt. Col.Pugh wrote to the General Officer Commanding, Bikaner State Forces, that the conduct, courage and cheerfulness of all men had been magnificient under the Japanese Artillery fire.[3] Lt. General Sir Montague Stofford wrote to the Maharaja of the valuable services

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1. Bikaner and the War (1939-45), p. 18
2. Ibid, pp. 19-20.
3. Letter dated 25.6.1944 from Lt.Col. L.H.O.Pugh, R.A. to the General Officer Commanding, Bikaner State Forces -

   ".....I should like to pay a very high tribute to the loyalty and assistance given me by Major Kishan Singh, his officers and men in this matter..... I have received ungrudging cooperation and am happy to state that I have now my complete Regiment Headquarters carried on Bijey Battery mules, with Bijey Battery drivers and many gunners who have most creditably offered to perform the duty of drivers, rather than remain behind.....During this last month the conduct, courage, cheerfulness and industry of..... all men

...contd. next page.

rendered by the Battery and of his admiration for the gallant and distinguished part played by it in the campaign.[1] Lt.General Sir Oliver Leese also wrote to the Maharaja expressing his appreciation of the admirable work which the Bijey Battery had done.[2]

The relations of the House of Bikaner with the Central Powers -the British at the time - had not only been very cordial during the reign of Maharaja Ganga Singh but they developed progressively to the mutual benefit of both. Inspite of the embarrassment caused by the interference of the Political Officers in the early days of his reign against which the Maharaja had successfully fought, he with his keen sense of propriety did not allow these incidents to mar his relations with the Central Powers. Even to Capt. Bayley, with whom the Maharaja had some difference of opinions in the matter of the Political Agent's scope of interference in the internal administration of the State, the Maharaja gave full credit for the reorganisation of the judiciary during the minority.[3] The voluminous correspondence between the Maharaja and the various Political

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has been magnificient, both under Jap Artillery fire and in the discomfort and kind of operation carried out in the monsoon on jungle covered hills at heights often greater than 6000 feet. I am proud to have such men under my command, and particularly gratified at the cooperation and intimate friendliness existing between the men of Bijey Battery, and those of the batteries in which they are now working, and with whom they live in the greatest harmony."

1. Letter dated 12.10.1945 from Lt.Gen Sir Montague Stopford Commander of the 12th Army, South East Asia Command to Maharaja Sadul Singh.
2. Letter dated 13.6.1945 from Lt.General Sir Oliver Leese to Maharaja Sadul Singh.
3. Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 29.9.1910 at a Darbar held at Lallgarh; The Bikaner State Rajpatra -Extraordinary, dated 29.9.1910.

Agents, the Agents to the Governor-General and the Viceroys bear ample testimony to his friendly relations. As early as 1900 we find Colonel Vincent writing to the Maharaja in connection with the differences with Capt. Bayley that he was glad that the Maharaja had written to him openly.[1] Lord Curzon as early as in 1902 informed the Maharaja of his having been selected to be one of the princes to be a Coronation guest, gave him his advice, and while doing so wrote to him that as a sincere friend he wanted to write a private line in advance since he was confident that the Maharaja would listen to what he would say.[2] This friendship grew firmer ever since and on the eve of laying down the reigns of office Lord Curzon wrote to him that he had developed a regard for the Maharaja which had not only led him to watch with warmest interest every incident of his career but that it would not cease on his leaving India.[3]

These relations had become so strengthened by 1905 that when the Prince of Wales visited India in that year, Bikaner was included in his itinerary. On his departure from Bikaner the Prince of Wales wrote to the Maharaja that among the happy

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 134/XV; Col. H.A.Vincent's letter dated 19.1.1900 -

   "Your letter of the 20th has caused me some anxiety as I fear you are in a state of irritation..... You know I am only too glad that you should write to me openly as you do and hope you will always do so..."

2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 3/VIII- Lord Curzon's confidential letter to the Maharaja, dated 24.5.1902 -

   "It gave me much pleasure to recommend your name to His Majesty the King as a coronation guest in place of the Nawab of Bhawalpur.

   But I want as a sincere friend to write a private line to you in advance, since I am confident that you will listen to what I say.....

3. Ibid, Lord Curzon's letter dated 1.9.1905.

recollections he would carry away from India there would be none more cherished than those of his stay at Bikaner and of the friendship between the Maharaja and himself which had been so firmly cemented.[1]

The Maharaja had, by his intelligent management of the affairs of his State, his unflinching loyalty to the Crown and his steadfast relations with the Central authorities, been constantly growing in stature in the estimation of the Central Power and by this no less than by his own personal zeal and consistency, was in 1910 able to get removed the restrictions imposed upon him at the time he assumed full ruling powers.

From one of Mr. Gokhle's letters[2] to the Maharaja it is borne out that the two were very friendly and had complete confidence in each other. In this letter Mr. Gokhle alluded to the Maharaja's desire that Mr. Gokhle should come closer to the Viceroy, and narrates an incident by which it was brought about. The strong ties of friendship which existed between the Central Powers and the Maharaja enabled the latter to encourage close contacts and better understanding between the great national leader and the Viceroy. This was a significant service rendered by the Maharaja to the cause of India's national progress.

The Maharaja's wisdom in granting far-reaching reforms to his people such as the establishment of a Representative Assembly in 1913 enshrined him in the hearts of his people and further raised him in the estimation of the Central Powers. The Maharaja's spontaneous offer of service in the Great War of 1914 and his assistance in men and money strengthened the recognition of his loyalty to the Crown. His outstanding abilities and unswerving loyalty having thus been proved, it was but natural that the

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1. The House of Bikaner, p. 41 + letter from the Prince of Wales (George V) dated 27.11.1905.
2. Private Secretary to the Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 955/XVIII(291 A), Mr. Gokhle's letter dated the 25th February, 1912 to the Maharaja, Appendix XXIX.

Maharaja should have been selected a representative on Imperial War Conference and War Cabinets where his sound judgment and quick perception received due recognition. Maharaja Ganga Singh had always had the cause of the country at heart, as testified to by Mr. Gokhle. We find the Maharaja espousing openly the cause of his motherland and advocating in unequivocal terms the grant of such form of government to India as would place it at par with the other self-governing dominions of the empire.

The Maharaja's note of the 15th May, 1917 dealing with some important questions concerning India which was presented to the Secretary of State for India at his express request proved to be of crucial importance. The historic pronouncement of British government of the 20th September, 1917 which changed the course of Indian political evolution was not only anticipated in the Maharaja's minute but was indirectly traceable to it.

His selection in 1918 and 1919 to represent India at the Peace Conference and at the League of Nations, where India's representation was agreed to mainly as a result of his efforts is further proof of the friendship and close relations that existed between the House of Bikaner and the Central Powers. But what is more remarkable is his effort for and success in gaining recognition for India as an equal partner in the commonwealth thereby securing permanently its representation at the Imperial Conferences and the League of Nations.

Then again in the drawing up of the great Gang Canal Project and its implementation after chequered and protracted negotiations was not only due to the Maharaja's foresight, energy and singleness of purpose but also very largely to the support which he received from the Central Powers, through Lord Curzon, Sir Denzil Ibbetson, Sir Sikander Hyat Khan, Sir Claude Hill, Sir Malcolm Hailey and many others. His own contribution towards the successful conduct of the two world wars as also the earlier China and Somaliland campaigns only confirm his firm loyalty to the Crown which we have had occasion to see being duly recognised from all quarters.

On the other side he was on most intimate terms with the Nationalists in British India who were demanding Dominion Status or even Independence. Mr. Gokhle's regard for the Maharaja and the cooperation extended by the Maharaja to him has already been referred to. In 1929 we find Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya suggesting to the Maharaja that in the common interest of the motherland and the Indian States, it was desirable that the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes first discussed the recommendations of the Butler Committee with a few British Indian leaders before the Maharaja expressed his views to the Viceroy.[1] Pandit Malviya was assured by the Maharaja that the Princes had no intention of jeopardising the interests of their country or retarding legitimate British Indian Political aspirations.[2]

The Maharaja was not happy that the Congress did not participate in the Round Table Conference deliberations in 1930 where he had so vehemently pleaded the case for the grant of Dominion Status and the formation of a federation of British India and Indian States subject, of course, to certain essential safeguards. The most important one was, as described before, the recognition of the princes' treaty rights with the Crown which could not be transferred without consent. On his return to India, he strove to make sure that the Congress participated in the next session of the Round Table Conference. From a telegram dated the 5th March, 1931 from Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya addressed to the Maharaja[3] in which he said that he was glad to inform the Maharaja of satisfactory settlement having been reached between the Congress and the Government, it could

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 350/XVIII (291), telegram dated 15.6.1929 from Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya to Maharaja Ganga Singh.
2. Ibid, Maharaja Ganga Singh's telegram dated 18.6.1929 to Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya.
3. Ibid, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya's telegram dated 5.3.1931 to Maharaja Ganga Singh.

safely be deduced that the Maharaja had some hand at least in the matter. The Maharaja had an interview with Mahatma Gandhi on the 10th June, 1931 at the Maharaja's residence in Bombay when he urged upon Mahatma Gandhi the necessity of the Congress being represented and of Mahatma Gandhi's presence at the Round Table Conference.[1] He further promised to make arrangements for Gandhiji's passage to England as also for a separate kitchen to be provided for him on board the steamer.[2]

Thus it is that three loyalties were constantly and simultaneously working in him. His loyalty to the Crown which had almost acquired a religious sanctity with him, would not let him think for a moment of India severing its relations with the Crown or getting out of the empire. He firmly held the belief that India could neither progress nor be secure otherwise than by remaining a member of the Commonwealth. He held that the safety of India with far flung borders was made secure in the might of the British Navy and Army and that India's orderly and peaceful development depended much upon the resources and facilities offered by the British empire.

His loyalty to his mother country was no less important. He sincerely believed in India attaining its full political stature. He not only only sympathised with the legitimate aspirations of British India but also urged, whenever occasion demanded, generous and liberal measures to accelerate its constitutional advancement. His advocacy of the cause of India's freedom during his visit to England in 1917 was of supreme importance to the developments that followed. The British had been made to believe that the aspirations of the Indians were merely the result of seditious agitation. This view could no longer be maintained when the Maharaja who had proved beyond doubt his unshakable loyalty to the Crown, took up the cause

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 914/XVIII, Maharaja Ganga Singh's letter dated 9.7.1931 to Mahatma Gandhi -Appendix XXX.
2. Ibid, letter dated 4.7.1931, Appendix XXXI.

of India's advancement. It was he who brought out in clear cut terms the necessity of a formal and authoritative declaration that the ultimate object of the British Government was the granting of self-government ~~of~~to India. He countered the fear that such an action would be disliked by the princes. He, as one belonging to the princely order, made it very clear that the Indian princes were the sons of the soil and that rather than be an obstacle in the way of the grant of reforms they would rejoice in them. He did not rest content at this but insisted that the reforms should not only be granted on liberal and sympathetic lines but granted early for, he said, that he who gives quickly, gives twice.

His loyalty to the princely order,to his State and his subjects was equally clear. He maintained that the Indian States had existed even before the Mughals and had been enjoying full sovereign powers. He held that the treaties which were entered into with the British Government as a result of the peculiar circumstances of the time, were plighted words which must be respected. When he saw them being whittled down by Political practice and precedent, he took upon himself the task of fighting the high-handedness of the Paramount Power. He placed his views concerning the position of the Indian States with a firmness and clarity to which the British Government was not accustomed and it must be said to his credit that he succeeded in bringing about a revision of the political practice which changed the course of the Paramount Power's policy towards the States with lasting benefit to the Princely Order. It was, therefore, natural that with the new set up in the offing, he should have insisted on a proper safeguard for the treaty rights, against their future curtailment. His apprehensions were not without foundation. There was an indiscriminate campaign of villification and abuse against the Indian States.

He was disturbed by the diatribes of the British Indian agitators. Mahatma Gandhi had in his characteristic way come out with his advice to the princes "to cultivate friendly

relations with an organisation (Congress) that bids fair in the future, not very distant, to replace the paramount power - let us hope by friendly arrangement."[1] The stand taken by Congress was that Britain's relations with the States were a corollary to her occupation of India and they had no raison de'etr when that ended. Hence Maharaja's demand for safeguards: of constitutional guarantees for complete internal autonomy and the continuance of their treaty rights . He further wanted an assurance that the entry of the princes to any system of federation that might be evolved should be by free will and that their position should be that of equal partners. Even from the point of view of the basic human instinct of self-preservation, the safeguards sought for could not be criticised as being unjustifiable.

Adherence to these seemingly antagonistic loyalties some times caused misunderstanding. On the one hand Maharaja Ganga Singh was an anigma to the Political Department which could not fathom his mind particularly when at one and the same time he showed extreme loyalty to the Crown, fought for his rights if any encroachment took place and most zealously and fearlessly expressed his patriotic feelings for the freedom movement. On the other hand the British Indian leaders sometimes doubted his sincerity in his support for the advancement of British India. However, it was Maharaja Ganga Singh alone who could have blended the three into a harmonious scheme by visualising a form of federation, under the aegis of the Crown, wherein the Indian States were taken in as co-partners and the treaty rights and privileges of the princes secured by making them a direct charge on the Viceroy.

Maharaja Ganga Singh died, after a brief illness, at his Bombay residence on the 2nd February 1943 at 5.25 a.m. A representative of the Governor of Bombay and several princes including the Maharajas of Kashmir and Gwalior came to pay

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1. Michael Edwards; The last years of British India, p. 181.

their last respects. The body was taken by at 9.00 a.m. by a special plane to Bikaner where the last rites were performed. What the loss meant to us and specially myself who had always enjoyed his fond care and attention could only be imagined rather than described. However, it was a great solace to find that our bereavement was shared by each one of the Bikaneri citizen and the loss mourned not only by his family and his peoples but was felt throughout India and even abroad.

At a condolence meeting held at the Benaras Hindu University, the President of India, Shri S.Radhakrishnan, then Vice Chancellor of the University said, "His interest in this university was unbounded. So far as this University and the promotion of Hindu ideals were concerned he was next to none in his enthusiasm. In him we have lost a great patron of this Unviersity, a great friend in whose mature judgment and mellowed experience we could always rely. It will not be easy to get a successor who could take such an abiding interest in the University."[1]

A black-bordered Gazette of India extraordinary was issued by the Government of India on the occasion and the Viceroy paying a tribute to the Maharaja said, "His career was one of unceasing and varied activity in the course of which His Highness' remarkable talents and forceful personality gained for him an outstanding position of eminence and renown. In his State he inaugurated a new era of progress and prosperity. In the Chamber of Princes he played a great part which will have its place in Indian history. In the wider sphere of imperial and international affairs he enhanced not only his high reputation but the prestige of the princes and people of his motherland."[2] Their Excellencies also sent a telegram of condolence to Maharajkumar Sadul Singh saying that the death of the Maharaja was not only a loss to the princely order but to India and the empire.[3]

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1. Statesman, 5.2.1943
2. Ibid, 4.2.1943.
3. Ibid, 5.2.1943.

Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for India said, "By the death of His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner, India has lost her most distinguished public figure and the empire a soldier-statesman of first rank."[1]

In a press statement Seth Ram Krishan Dalmia said that the death of the Maharaja of Bikaner was a great loss to India and the Empire. He added that very few knew the Maharaja so intimately as he did and that he was to the Maharaja like a younger brother. He said that he knew the Maharaja to be a pure-hearted, child-like, simple, affectionate ruler.[2]

The Commander-in-Chief also sent a telegram of condolence to the Maharajkumar besides a personal telegram from Lord Wavell in which he said that Lady Wavell and the Indian Armoured corps of which the Maharaja was an Honorary Colonel joined him in sending their sympathies.[3]

A columnist wrote in the London Daily Telegraph that "London remembers him as a superb figure driving to St.Pauls in the silver Jubilee procession. Then he was unmistakably the same prince whom Sir William Opren and Sir James Guttine portrayed among the war leaders. He had still the dignity and handsome appearance which revealed a long lineage and his fine brown eyes flashed their acknowledgment of the cheering crowds".[4]

Sir Edward Durant wrote in the "Field" "Through his passing away the British Empire loses one of its most devoted counsellors, sport loses one of its most devoted and skilful protagonists and to personal friends it leaves a gap which can never be filled."[5]

The life of the Maharaja has very aptly been summed up by the Times of India as "a fine record of heroic and permanent achievements" which was "for a major part of his 63 years devoted with exemplary single-mindedness to the service of his people, his country and the British Commonwealth. In so doing he placed Bikaner on the map and himself became a figure of world distinction."[6]

1. The Times of India, 4.2.1943
2. National Call, 4.2.1943
3. Statesman, 6.2.1943
4. The Hindu, 7.2.1943
5. The Field, 20.2.1943
6. The Times of India, 3.2.1943

CHAPTER IX

The Role of Bikaner in the Unification of India.

Born on the 7th September, 1902, Maharaja Sadul Singh succeeded Maharaja Ganga Singh on his demise on the 2nd February, 1943 as the twenty-second ruler of Bikaner. Before he attained his majority at the age of eighteen, he had been placed with various Ministers and senior officers to acquire practical administrative training. On the attainment of his majority after holding a formal Darbar, Maharaja Ganga Singh invested him with the powers of Chief Minister[1] which post he held for four and a half years[2] and thus when he became the ruler of Bikaner, he had a full knowledge of the State administration.

The six years that Maharaja Sadul Singh was destined to reign actively were the years of great political turmoil and radical changes in the States as well as in British India. Many steps were taken in the Bikaner State itself to democratise the system of Government. During this very period India had come through the ravages of World War II and slowly but surely moved onwards to attain Independence.

The period of Maharaja Sadul Singh's reign was full of events pertaining to political relationship of the House of Bikaner with the Central Powers. The very first event on the Maharaja's accession to the throne was the decision of the Government of India to revert to the general system applicable to other States of political relationship being

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2278/XXVI, part II-B -Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 9.9.1920 on the coming of age of Maharajkumar Sadul Singh.
2. Maharajkumar Sadul Singh requested for being permitted to relinquish the post of the Chief Minister early in 1925 and this was acceded to though reluctantly.

conducted through the Political Agent, in this case the Resident, Western Rajputana States, and not direct with the Resident for Rajputana. The Political Department of the Government of India was not happy at Maharaja Ganga Singh's success in establishing direct political relations, thus alone having this privilege amongst all States, and took the first opportunity of undoing it. As a matter of fact, there is a memo on record dated the 7th March, 1943 of points for talk with the Resident which shows that the Maharaja's consent was sought for and had to be acquiesced in by the Maharaja even prior to the presentation of the Viceroy's Kharita at the Darbar of the 8th March, 1943 on his accession.[1] It was only for reasons of courtesy that the implementation of the change was officially communicated some time later.[2]

While presenting the Kharita, the Resident in his speech said that the Maharaja had succeeded to the gaddi at a crucial time in the history of the world when the State could no longer be expected to remain unaffected by outside influences. He added that economic inter-dependence, increase in travel facilities and in their speed, impact of external ideas through newspapers and radio, all tended to make the State no longer self-contained or self-sufficient. He further pointed out that

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 41/XXVI, part III. This is also confirmed by Maharaja Sadul Singh's letter dated 23.3.1943 to Major Alington, Resident, Western Rajputana States, Jodhpur -Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.110/XV.

2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.184/XIV -Col.G.V.B.Gillan's (Resident for Rajputana) letter No.C/21-43 dated 25.3.1943 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.

   Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.110/XV -Major N.S.Alington, Resident for Western Rajputana States' letter dated 21.3.1943 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.

   Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 184/XIV; Maharaja Sadul Singh's letter dated 27.3.1943 to Col. Gillan.

the development of the people of India would also present problems but said that he was hopeful that the Maharaja would know how to make use of what was beneficial and discard what was harmful in the new political ideas as they developed.[1]

In his reply the Maharaja said that he realised that the world was passing through a crisis of unparalleled magnitude and that its emergence out of the struggle would surely witness far-reaching and all-embracing changes. He added that he believed that the States could no longer remain unaffected by these extraneous influences or escape the impact of the new and powerful currents of thought which would affect the whole world and realised how essential it was for the ruler to keep abreast of the times.[2]

The Maharaja had on his accession to the gaddi announced "Praja hit vratino Vayam" (in the service of my people) to be his motto and guiding principle and reiterated in his speech dated the 8th March, 1943 his desire to follow in the foot-steps of his illustrious father in the matter of introduction of constitutional reforms. He expressed his ardent hope of seeing his people associated with the administration of the State in an ever-increasing manner.[3]

The second World War was still going on with full vigour when Maharaja Sadul Singh succeeded to the gaddi. And the young Maharaja who, as heir-apparent, had already offered his sword and personal services in the cause, again expressed his desire for an opportunity to proceed on active service.[4] He also repeated the offer in his letter dated the 25th July, 1943 after becoming the Maharaja. The offer being accepted this time,

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 41/XXVIII, pt.III, Resident for Rajputana's speech dated 8.3.1943 at the Kharita Darbar held in Bikaner.
2. Ibid, Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 8.3.1943
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

the Maharaja, accompanied by his second son, Maharajkumar Amar Singh, left Bikaner on the 26th October, 1943, and visited the Sadul Light Infantry stationed in Persia, the 49 (Bikaner) G.P.T. Company stationed in Iraq as well as certain other units of other States Forces and Imperial and Allied troops including the 4th Indian Division and the 31st Indian and Armoured Division. He returned to India in November, 1943 and on his way to Bikaner visited the Ganga Risala which was then stationed in Sind.[1]

In November 1944, the Maharaja again proceeded to the Assam-Burma war theatre where the Bikaner Bijey Battery was engaged in active operations against the Japanese and returned to Bikaner in December, 1944.[2] While passing through Calcutta on his return home, the Maharaja received a tumultous reception by a lac or more people of Bikaner settled in Calcutta in pursuit of business. The Maharaja and his staff were the recipients of the 1939-45 Star, Burma Star, Defence Medal and the War Medal.[3]

Other main contributions of Bikaner towards war effort were the raising of the 2nd and 3rd Infantry Battalions[4], an Infantry training centre, an Artillary training centre, and a Guard Battalion. Besides, a Prisoners of War camp had also been opened in Bikaner and two war hospitals started to provide relief to the wounded and the sick. These war hospitals were

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1. Bikaner and the War (1939-45), p. 8
2. Ibid, p. 9
3. A list showing the honours, titles, medals, etc., of Maharaja Sadul Singh is given at Appendix XXXII
4. The 2nd Infantry Battalion was later named as the Karni Infantry.

visited by Lord and Lady Wavell in February, 1944 and Lady Mountbatten in 1945 who spoke highly of them.[1] The monetary contributions, including those for the purchase of light tanks and aeroplanes and providing amenities to Indian and British soldiers and relief to the people of London as also for other relief works like the Red Cross, amounted to Rs. 1519063-6-2 both from the State and the Maharaja's Privy Purse.[2] It was in recognition of the various war services of the Maharaja and the Bikaner State forces that the Commander-in-Chief presented a saluting gun to the Maharaja on the 23rd December, 1946. The presentation was made by Lt.General Sir Frank Messervy, at Bikaner when in his speech he paid glowing tributes to the services rendered by the various units of the Bikaner State Forces.[3] A Japanese officers sword surrendered to

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1. Lord Wavell recorded his opinion as under:-
   "My wife and I visited No. 1 war hospital on February 3 and were much impressed by its efficiency and by all that is being done for the cure and comfort of the patients."

   Lady Mountbatten wrote as below:-
   "I was so much impressed by the very excellent accommodation and magnificient equipment in them all and by the exceptional care being given to the patients and I know what a difference your own close and personal interest in them has meant and what great encouragement it gives to all working in them, and receiving treatment there. I shall much look forward to telling the King and Queen of your fine gesture, which among many others has made such a great contribution to the war effort"
   - Bikaner and the War (1939-45), p. 49

2. Bikaner and the War(1939-45), pp. 29-75

3. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. 4, No. 5, January, 1947, pp.7-8; speech made by Lt.Gen.Sir Frank Messervy at Bikaner on the 23rd December, 1946 -
   "It is my pleasant duty to present to you on behalf of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and the Indian Army this gun in recognition of the services of Your Highness and the Bikaner State Forces in the World War of 1939-45.

   x x x

   The Ganga Risala was the first to leave the State and the first of the units of the Indian States forces to go overseas on active service. This famous regiment returned

...contd. next page.

the Allied Forces in the South East Asia Command was also presented to the Maharaja in recognition of Bikaner's contribution to the victory in South East Asia. The Maharaja was also presented with a war souvenir on behalf of the South East Asia Command.[1]

It may be mentioned here that the House of Bikaner had always kept its plighted word under the treaty relations to stand by the side of the Crown and the Bikaner State's Forces had served side by side with the armed forces of the British empire in the service of the King Emperor whenever an occasion arose. In the words of Maharaja Sadul Singh, there had hardly

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to the State after serving with distinction both overseas and in the Sind desert against the Hurs for four and a half years.

The next unit to go was the Sadul Light Infantry which served outside the State for more than five years and carried out its many tasks in PAIFORCE with zeal and efficiency. Next, I must mention the Bijey Battery which served on the north-west frontier from 1941 and later in the 7th Indian Division in Burma till the end of 1945. I was proud to have them under my command during the year and a half I commanded the 7th Indian Division and would like to pay my personal tribute to their gallantry and efficiency in the many battles which have made the 7th Division (Indian) famous.

In addition to these major units excellent work was done by 49 G.T.Coy and by a large number of Bikaner State subjects who enlisted and served in regular units of the Indian Army.

Behind these gallant troops the whole time were ranged Your Highness and the people of Bikaner State forwarding the war effort by every means at your disposal. I know the personal encouragement given by Your Highness during your visits to your own troops and the soldiers serving in the Indian Army from your State in the various theatres of War.

On behalf of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and the whole Indian Army I express our admiration and our gratitude for the unstinted help given us by Your Highness and your people."

1. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. IV, No.9 -April 1947, p.17

been any great military operation in which the empire was involved since the coming into operation of the treaty relations with the Crown, where the units of the Bikaner army had not played their due part.[1]

Inspite of his keen desire to play as important a role as possible to bring about a successful termination of the war, the Maharaja was at the same time ever mindful of the welfare of the people of Bikaner and of his promise to progressively associate them with the administration of the State which fact was always upper-most in his heart.[2] Since a major portion of Bikaner lies in the Thar Desert, the question of making water available, in adequate quantities and for providing the supply of potable water for the inhabitants of this vast area had become a top priority project for the Maharaja. With this in view, the Maharaja, as a first measure, created in 1943 the Sadul Water Supply and rural reconstruction fund with a sum of forty lacs of rupees for the purpose.[3] Further, the education of the people of Bikaner so as to enable them to ~~take~~ play their due part in the development of the State was very dear to his heart. In order to provide incentive to promote extensive education, the Maharaja instituted in 1945 two scholarships at the Roorkie Engineering College, with facilities for further training in America to deserving Bikaner students by donating a sum of £5000/-[4] The Maharaja also donated a sum of rupees four lacs to the Benaras Hindu University for the Greater India Scholarships. The sum was meant to provide 13 scholarships of the value of Rs.75/- each

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1. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. IV, No. 6 -January 1947; speech made by Maharaja Sadul Singh on the 23rd December, 1946 while accepting the Saluting Gun presented to him by the Commander-in-Chief in recognition of services in the World War 1939-45
2. Maharaja Sadul Singh's message dated 26.5.1945 to the Legislative Assembly.
3. Note on some salient features of the first eighteen months of His Highness the Maharaja's reign, p. 3
4. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. IV, No. 6 - January 1947, p. 32

per month, eight of which were earmarked for students belonging to the Indian communities settled in different parts of the world, and one each meant for students from Combodia, Siam, Indonesia, Laos and Bali islands.[1] A further sum of rupees one lakh was donated to the Benaras Hindu University at the same time for the construction of a hostel to be named Ganga Bhawan and a temple garden to be called Sadul Vatika.[2]

Before we come to the final phase in the history of the rapid political changes in the Bikaner State leading to its merger with the Indian Union it will be pertinent to digress and review in brief the impact of the British on the State especially during the reigns of Maharaja Ganga Singh and the first half of Maharaja Sadul Singh's reign.

Like the rest of India, modern Bikaner was profoundly influenced by its association with the British. Not only the administrative system but the culture of the State experienced a rapid change with the advent of English education and British ideas flowing into the body politic of the State. In the modernisation and westernisation of the State administration, Maharaja Ganga Singh was faithfully served by foreign officers as well as Indians.While the utilisation of foreign talent in the Bikaner State administration has been a subject of a little criticism, the Maharaja himself has clarified his position during his speech in reply to a banquet address given to him where he said -

> "..... I am aware that there is a certain amount of unfriendly criticism in this connection (British officers participating in the administration of the State) in certain quarters outside our State. But where the interests of the administration are concerned, I allow no room for other considerations. When I feel that the employment of British officers will tand to greater efficiency and usefulness; when the members of my Council feel, as they do, that the British officers

1. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. 4, No. 9-April, 1947, p. 15
2. Prime Minister's (Bikaner State) office file No. 8 of 1949 (in the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner).

> are of conspicuous ability and thus eminently fitted to fill the positions they occupy and that they satisfactorily discharge the duties entrusted to them, it is only natural that we should avail ourselves of their services. Otherwise we should be failing in our duty to the State."

Some of the officers in the Bikaner State who hailed from foreign countries as for example, Mr. G.D.Rudkin, a British National who was Revenue Minister, is known to have himself lived in the desert in a tent and travelled on camel's back in Rajputana during the scorching summer heat while laying out the Gang Canal project. It is due to the untiring work of this man that the Gang Canal project took its final shape in a record time and the arid zones of northern Bikaner were turned into a green belt of Bikaner which was later known as the granary of Bikaner. The names of a few other important foreign officials may be mentioned here. They were -

1. Mr. A.W.E. Standley, Secretary, Public Works Department.
2. Mr. Hamilton Hardinge, Inspector General of Police and later Home Minister.
3. Mr. J.Fearfield, Manager, Bikaner State Railway.
4. Mr. R.H.T.Mackenzie, Chief Engineer, P.W.Department.
5. Mr. Charles Todhunter, Adviser.
6. Mr. B.A. English, Director of Education.
7. Mr. S.C.Cook, Electrical & Mechanical Engineer.
8. Dr. Weingarten, Principal Medical Officer (German Jew)
9. Dr. Van Allen, Chief Surgeon (American).

Ministers began to be appointed and in course of time we see that the administrative set up of the Bikaner State began to be run to a large extent parallel to that of British India. The Ministers were served in turn by a highly efficient civil service[1]. While the Maharaja himself held all the powers of chief executive, nevertheless, the legislative assembly was introduced as far back as 1912, again a legacy of British

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1. As a result of the efficiency of the Bikaner services, many of its officers were posted to the highest posts in the Rajasthan Government at the time of Integration. Appendix XXXIII.

contact with India and functioned very smoothly till Integration.

While Urdu was the court language in Bikaner and was later superseded by Hindi, English language began to be given a most important place when all correspondence in the State began to be conducted in the English language. Most of the proceedings of the legislative assembly were in Hindi. The idea of separating judiciary from the executive was also borrowed from the British political thought and introduced in Bikaner as far back as 1912.

English was introduced in the schools as a compulsory medium and was followed in the same way as in British India. It was not common to find people conversing in English even in the city. But after the introduction of English, boys and girls in village schools knew how to read, write and speak English.

Maharaja Ganga Singh was very proud of his hospitals and these were manned by a large number of doctors from America, England and Germany for the betterment of humanity.

After World War II, Bikaner State also acquired some aeroplanes and Maharaja Sadul Singh himself used a British Dove aircraft for his travels. Plans for a flying club in Bikaner, however, were not possible owing to the Integration of the State although a proposal for such a club was awaiting Government sanction. The author was one of the first Bikaneris to get the private pilot's licence.

Club life and foreign sports became quite popular and were encouraged at all levels including schools and colleges. During Maharaja Ganga Singh's reign, perhaps influenced by his trips abroad, modern westernised dress was introduced in Bikaner and officers and the royal family often dressed in modern western style although the Indian style, Achkan and Safa, continued on ceremonial occasions.

Modern techniques of agriculture and irrigation were introduced in the Bikaner State by Maharaja Ganga Singh with great benefit. Though situated in a dry belt of Rajasthan, in the Thar desert, Bikaner has always been proud of its beautiful

flowers. Both at Lallgarh and Gajner as also in the public gardens, beautiful gardens exist and the winter flowers are a on display to be seen. In Ganganagar, after the advent of Gang Canal, growing of many citrus fruits of various varieties have been experimented with success. The Ganganagar Maltas have won the all India prizes in agricultural shows. Ganganagar today boasts of the highest number of tractors employed anywhere in India.

Industrialisation also received impetus. In Maharaja Sadul Singh's reign the industrial growth of Bikaner was given a great fillip. Transport and communication were considerably improved in the time of Maharaja Ganga Singh and Maharaja Sadul Singh. Railway lines were extended and most large cities were linked by trains and roadways. Electrification of towns was taken up in the time of Maharaja Ganga Singh and the thermal plant could give electricity not only to the city of Bikaner but as far as Ratangarh and Churu situated half way between Delhi and Bikaner. Maharaja Sadul Singh had a plan for having a grid, and it was also his plan that all towns with a population of 5000 and over should have electricity. In the later years, especially in the time of Maharaja Sadul Singh, there was a sharp change in architectural planning. It was influenced by the British and European architects in Bikaner like Mr. Mackenzie and Broomfield.[1]

In food and drink, the English and French menus found their way into the culinary department and it was not unusual to see banquet or dinner parties conducted in western style with menus written in French.

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1. Several new townships were planned by Maharaja Sadul Singh who was most interested in town planning. Many of these works of town planning never left the paper stage due to the Integration of the State. Immediately after the Integration, the entire emphasis on development shifted to Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan and the growth of erstwhile capitals of other States suddenly was retarded.

PLATE XVI



Conquest of Mars, an oil painting by author.
(37"x26")

Western music also invaded the cultural life of Bikaner and it was not an uncommon sight to see Western ballroom dances in the clubs and big dinner parties at the palaces. The Ganga Risala had one of the finest military bands in the country and was on occasions specially requested at Abu, the seat of Agent to the Governor-General for Rajputana, during the summer months. Maharaja Sadul Singh also maintained a seven-piece orchestra, which played western symphonic music as also western dance music. This was greatly appreciated by Lord Mountbatten when he visited Bikaner in 1948 and heard the orchestra both western symphonic and Indian classical music during lunch and dinner.

By a proclamation in 1946[1] the Maharaja announced his decision to reconstitute the Bikaner Legislative Assembly on a more popular basis; and to achieve that end, the appointment of the Constitution Committee and the Franchise and Constituency Committee for formulating and submitting a draft constitution and demarcating constituencies respectively.[2]

Though the proclamation was well-received by the people generally, the Bikaner Praja Parishad, the counterpart of Indian National Congress, entertained some doubts and suspicion. Yet its leaders announced in the press that they would not precipitate matters and that the working committee of the Praja Parishad and the workers' convention had decided to cooperate with the Bikaner Government in the constitution and franchise committees.[3] After due deliberations, the Bikaner Constitution Act, 1947 conferring a Government, which while functioning under the aegis of the Maharaja, would be responsible to the people, was duly promulgated in December, 1947. The seemingly long interval between the proclamation of August, 1946, and the promulgation of the Act was due to the

1. Proclamation of Maharaja Sadul Singh dated 31.8.1946. The Statesman, 4.9.1946
2. Proclamation of Maharaja Sadul Singh dated 31.8.1946
3. Hindustan Times, 27.9.1946

amount of work involved in eliciting public opinion from different interests on franchise and constitution as also to the great upheaval that the country witnessed as a result of partition and the great strain to which the Bikaner Government was specially put to in arranging safe passage to lacs of migrants both from India to Pakistan and from Pakistan to India in the world's biggest and most gigantic migration of fleeing humanity.

The 1947 Act brought into existence a bicameral legislature based on wide franchise; and the entire administration, with certain reservations, was entrusted to a council responsible to the legislature. It also contemplated introduction of full responsible government under the aegis of the ruler within a period of two years.[1]

However, with a view to further hastening the introduction of full responsible government, the Maharaja announced on the 2nd February, 1948[2] his decision to establish responsible government in April, 1948 and also dispensed with the interim arrangements envisaged in the Bikaner Constitution Act of 1947. In March 1948 the Maharaja further reiterated[3] his decision of January, 1948 that the Constitution Act would be open to amendment by the new legislature after the elections. He also expressed his intention to make further modifications in the Act itself including the franchise, adding that this would necessitate the postponement of elections for some time. But as an immediate step, the Maharaja announced the formation of an Interim Coalition Ministry from the 18th March, 1948, to replace his Executive Council to carry on the day to day administration of the State during the intervening period.[4]

The coalition ministry was to consist of the Congress

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1. Proclamation of Maharaja Sadul Singh dated 4.12.1947
2. Proclamation of Maharaja Sadul Singh dated 2.2.1948
3. Proclamation of Maharaja Sadul Singh dated 18.3.1948
4. Ibid.

representatives and the Maharaja's nominees representing different interests in the State on a fifty-fifty basis. After protracted consultations and discussions between the Congress and the Maharaja regarding the terms of the Congress joining the government and the allocation of portfolios, a coalition ministry was eventually formed on the 18th March, 1948 comprising of -

1. Kanwar Jaswant Singh of Daudsar[1], Prime Minister
2. Chaudhari Hardutt Singh (Congress) Dy.Prime Minister
3. Pandit Gauri Shankar (Congress)
4. Sardar Mastan Singh (Congress)
5. Chaudhari Kumbha Ram (Congress)
6. Name to be announced latter
7. Thakur Kumer Singh of Manakrasar
8. Seth Kushal Chand Daga
9. Pandit Suraj Karan Acharya, and
10. Mohammad Ahmad Baksh Sindhi.

At the time of the formation of the coalition ministry, an understanding was reached that the Congress would participate in the general elections which had been announced to take place on the 23rd September, 1948 and subsequent days and that in the meantime the ministry would function under the existing rules of procedure.

For some time the work went on smoothly. But it was noticed after some time that the dissident group in the Congress i.e. the group which did not favour the formation of the coalition ministry began to agitate against the State. In

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1. Kanwar Jaswant Singh is the son of Major Thakur Prithviraj Singh of Daudsar. He graduated from the Benaras Hindu University in 1927. He was Assistant Private Secretary to Maharaja Ganga Singh from 19.7.1931 and Private Secretary for 1931-36 and 1937-40. He became Foreign and Political Secretary in 1940 and was appointed Public Works Minister in 1941, which post he held till 1948. In 1948 he was appointed Prime Minister. He accompanied Maharaja Ganga Singh to England and Europe in 1930 and again in 1931 when the Maharaja went there to attend the Imperial Conference, League of Nations and the Round Table Conferences and was in close touch with him.

order to refute the allegations of the agitators, a public meeting was called in the Sunaron-ki-Gawar at Bikaner and was addressed by Jaswant Singh when other ministers including the Congress nominees were also present. The meeting, however, ended in rowdism and the congress ministers, instead of trying to quieten the mischievous element and restore order, deserted the meeting.

The agitation continued and the Congress dissidents now raised their voice for the merger of the State. The Maharaja brought these activities of the dissidents to the notice of Sardar Patel, and in view of the fact that the Bikaner State had been classified as a viable[1] unit and also that the Maharaja was not only anxious to introduce more responsible government in the State but had actually taken steps for its implementation and the general elections were not far off, he asked the Sardar to see that the agitation was stopped forthwith and, in fact, the agitation did stop.

Some time later the Maharaja had to proceed to England on medical grounds and the author of this book, as heir-apparent, in consultation with his mother, Rajmata Sudarshan Kumariji, was to deputise for him during his absence. The Maharaja had also made arrangements for the advice of Shri Meharchand Mahajan, at the time adviser to the Maharaja, being available to the author. It was noticed that the Congress ministers soon began to disregar the extant rules of procedure. An instance in point was the summary dismissal by a Congress minister of a Head of Department on the spot when, according to the rules,he could

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1. States which had individual representation in the Constituent Assembly were to be treated as viable units. In addition to individual representation, a viable State was also that State which had a population of over ten lacs and an income of one crore or more. Bikaner's income at the time of integration was 3.00 crores and it had a population of a little over 13 lacs according to 1941 census. In 1951 Bikaner's population stood at

be removed only by the orders of the Maharaja. Moreover, the officer was on a fixed tenure and could not be removed before the expiry of his term. The Prime Minister did not agree with the Minister's action. The Congress Ministers made it a case of prestige. Since the Maharaja was away in England, the heir-apparent, deputising for him, referred the matter to him in England and the case was ordered to be kept pending till the Maharaja's return. The officer was subsequently reinstated by the Maharaja on his return, after a full enquiry into the circumstances of the case.

The general elections in the Bikaner State had been announced to take place on the 23rd September, 1948 and following days, and the work was proceeding smoothly when in August, 1948 the State Congress Committee demanded postponement of the elections. As the Maharaja was away in Europe at the time the Maharaja was apprised of the demand by the author. Since, however, the author had explicit instructions from the Maharaja to ensure that the work of granting responsible government by the time stipulated must not be allowed to suffer under any circumstances, and further, as no cogent reasons were advanced for the desired postponement of the elections by the Congress, he could not accede to the request to put the clock of democracy back. Being a firm believer in democracy and sharing his father's determination to see that Bikaner held its elections on time and that democratic government was ushered in as soon as possible, it was imperative that the elections schedule be followed. He still recollects vividly the visits of Shri Hiralal Shastri and Shri Gokul Bhai Bhatt, Congress leaders of Rajasthan, and the long discussions they had with him on the subject of postponement of elections.[1]

1. Strangely enough four years later, Shri Gokul Bhai Bhatt and Shri Jai Narain Vyas were defeated in the first general elections for the Assembly seats for Rajasthan; Shri Hiralal Shastri having not contested the elections. On the formation of the Greater Rajasthan, Hiralal Shastri became the first Chief Minister for sometime but resigned about January, 1951 He was succeeded by C.S.Venkatachar who remained in office for some time and in April, 1951 Shri Jai Narain Vayas became

...contd. next page.

Whatever explanation the Bikaner State Congress Committee might have given for the basis of their demand, and these were later duly refuted by Maharaja Sadul Singh on his return, in a press communique[1], the fact remained that the Bikaner State Congress Committee wanted to gain time as it was not sure of its hold on the people. It had considerable doubts of its success in the elections. The intention not to contest the elections and face a show-down was understandable particularly when the States Peoples Conference had tried to convince the world that they had complete control over public opinion in the States. Whether this claim was justified in the case of Bikaner and Jodhpur is a doubtful matter. As a matter of fact the Congress lost the Parliamentary seat from Bikaner in the very first general elections in 1952 -just four years later, as also in 1957 and 1962 and has upto date not been able to return its candidate to the Rajasthan Assembly from the Bikaner city.[2]

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the Chief Minister. Later, Jai Narain Vyas being defeated in the general elections, he vacated the office in March, 1952 but subsequently having won in bye-election from Kishangarh in September, 1952, he again became the Chief Minister and held the office till 1954.

1. Maharaja Sadul Singh's press communique dated 1.9.1948
2. The results of the general elections for the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha may be interesting to note -

	1952		1957		1962
Congress	82	...	120	...	89 *
Independent	35	...		...	21
Jan Sangh	8	...	56	...	15
Swatantra	-	...		...	36
Others	35	...		...	15
Total	160	...	176	...	176

* As a matter of fact when the results were announced, the position was Congress 88 and all others 88, but later on one independent joined the Congress group.

Results of general elections for seats from Rajasthan for the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha were:

Year	Lok Sabha			Rajya Sabha		
	Congress	Opposition	total	Congress	Opposition	To ta
1952	12	8	20	6	3	9
1957	18	3	21	9	1	10
1962	15	6	21	7	3	10

However, as it is, the Bikaner State Congress Committee, by its resolution of the 28th August, 1948, created an impasse by deciding not to participate in the general elections and also by calling upon its representatives in the coalition ministry to tender their resignations. In complete contradiction to this demand for postponement were the views of Mahatma Gandhi who had written to N.C. Kelkar that he would like the States to grant autonomy to their subjects and the rulers to regard themselves as the trustees of the people.[1] Yet when the Maharaja was trying to introduce full responsible government in the State, the Congress-run Praja Parishad was doing its best to obstruct its passage. This created an unfortunate situation; and the Maharaja, who was constantly being kept in touch by the heir-apparent, returned to Bikaner on the 31st August, 1948. He immediately set himself to the task of resolving the tangle if he could and a letter was addressed to the President of the Bikaner State Congress Committee for elucidation and substantiation of the various points involved asking for a reply by the 4th September, 1948, so that the election schedule would not be disturbed.[2] Though on strictly democratic principles any party not participating in the process of democratisation should have been left out and the elections carried on ushering in thereby the dawn of a completely democratic administration, the part played by the Congress in the freedom struggle had made, in the minds of many, the need of Congress participation imperative. The Maharaja, therefore, secured an appointment with Sardar Patel and went to Delhi where, at a lunch with the Sardar at his house, the Maharaja

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1. M.K.Gandhi; The Indian States Problem, p. 65 -
   In his letter dated 2.7.1934 Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Shri N.C. Kelkar -
   "I would like the States to grant autonomy to their subjects and would like the princes to regard themselves as and be in fact trustees for the people over whom they rule, drawing for themselves only a small and definite percentage of the income. I have not lost hope that the princes will deem it a pride to become real trustees of their people. I do not seek to destroy their States."
2. Maharaja Sadul Singh's press communique dated 1.9.1948

discussed the subject with him. The Maharaja was advised to discuss the matter with V.P. Menon, and Hiralal Shastri, Jai Narain Vyas and Gokul Bhai Bhatt who were also in Delhi at the time. Finally, the Maharaja was advised to postpone the elections.

The Maharaja returned to Bikaner on the 6th September, 1948. The Congress ministers had tendered their resignations and the Maharaja had no option but to accept them, dissolve the interim ministry and postpone the elections. This decision was announced in a press communique dated 7th September, 1948. At the same time the Maharaja also announced his intention to appoint a Prime Minister from outside the State so that no one might have any genuine cause for complaint and till the services of such an officer could be obtained on loan from the Government of India, the Maharaja decided that Kanwar Jaswant Singh of Daudsar should carry on as the Prime Minister.[1] These changes were brought into effect by necessary administrative orders from the 8th September, 1948. Kanwar Jaswant Singh carried on as the Prime Minister till C.S.Venkatachar, I.C.S., former Dewan of Jodhpur, took over in October, 1948.

This precipitate action on the part of the Bikaner Congress let the chance slip whereby Bikaner would have attained full responsible government even earlier than the rest of the country. Their diffidence in their claim that they had the backing of popular demand for merger became quite apparent, at least in so far as Bikaner was concerned.

It may be recalled that in consequence of the crisis in the affairs of India following the Japanese advance, Churchil had made an announcement in the House of Commons on the 11th March 1942 that the War Cabinet was sending out Sir Stafford Cripps to India to remove the doubts and apprehensions of the

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1. Maharaja Sadul Singh's press communique dated 7.9.1948 The Bikaner Rajpatra-Extraordinary, dated 8.9.1948

Indian people regarding the proposals made by the British Government for grant of reforms to meet their aspirations. The proposals were, however, either to be accepted in whole or rejected in toto. Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in India on the 22nd March, 1942. The proposals, so far as they concerned the Indian States, contemplated a revision of the treaty arrangements.[1] The rulers met Sir Stafford Cripps on 2nd April, 1942, and Maharaja Sadul Singh was one of the delegates, the other representative being the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar and the Maharaja of Patiala. After considerable discussion, the Indian States' delegation adopted a resolution[2] that in the interests of the country the princes would be prepared to make all reasonable contribution compatible with their sovereignty and integrity of their States. But the offer that Sir Stafford Cripps had brought was rejected both by the Congress and the Muslim League and hence the question of its acceptance by the Princes did not arise.

Later, recognising the trend of the times, the imminence of the changes necessarily to follow, and the tirade often hurled by British Indian leaders against the administration of the Indian States, the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes appointed in 1944 a small committee of rulers, with Maharaja Sadul Singh as its chairman, to formulate proposals for a minimum standard of efficient administration. While speaking in the Princes' Standing Committee on the Report of

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1. V.P.Menon; The Story of the Integration of the Indian States, p. 48

2. Resolution dated 10.4.1942 passed by the Indian States delegation -

"The Indian States will be glad as always, in the interest of their motherland, to make their contribution in every reasonable manner compatible with the sovereignty and integrity of the States, towards the framing of a constitutio for India. The States should be assured, however, that in the event of a number of States not finding it feasible to adhere, the non-adhering States or groups of States so desiring would have the right to form a union of their own, with full sovereign status in accordance with a suitable and approved procedure derived for the purpose."

this committee, generally known as the Bikaner Committee, the Maharaja stressed that the States had claimed and had been recognised as an 'order' with the result that the States system was judged not by the efficiency of the better governed States but by the standards of those States which for no fault of theirs but for lack of resources were not in a position to afford necessary service to the people.[1] He further pointed out that it was no more possible to hold fast to the principle of isolation, and urged the princes to get down to brass tacks and do something practical before it was too late.[2] In order to achieve this end he suggested the grouping of the smaller states either with bigger States or amongst themselves so as to form units capable of making provisions for meeting essential requirements under modern conditions. He added that if this were agreed to in principle, a scheme might be evolved as to how best to safeguard their position, the discussion of which had been agreed to by the Viceroy and the Political Adviser to the Government of India.[3] The Maharaja justified his stand from

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1. Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 30-9-1945 at the Informal Princes Standing Committee: "Public opinion rightly or wrongly equates the States with the conditions prevailing in these States."

2. Ibid.
   "Unless we make even at this last moment, a real effort and agree among ourselves to do something practical, here and now, without delay, it may be too late."

3. Ibid -
   ".....This being so, if we are to safeguard against any undue pressure being brought to bear individually or collectively on any group of States from the Political Department or the Political Officers - as complaints in this regard are being heard from some of Your Highnesses from time to time - and if we are to prevent the Political Department from going ahead with their own schemes in their own way which is not liked by a large number of Princes of the smaller States, then to my mind there is little doubt that we should have some kind of an agreed alternative scheme which we can put forward. If we can have such a scheme, I for one think there will not be very great difficulty in getting the Political Department to modify their policy to a certain extent in regard to those matters where reasonable objection can be taken and to put them right."

another aspect. He believed that before long the princes would be faced with the problem of how the States were going to fit into the future set up of India,[1] and warned them that unless the smaller States formed into groups which could provide necessary amenities to the people and march on with the times, they were likely to be wiped out.[2] Soon after, the Maharaja reiterated his convictions in a confidential circular to the princes wherein he said that the passing of time would convince them whether or not his views were sound, and emphasized that the policy of drift and delay would be suicidal to them.[3] His foreboding soon came true.

In February 1946 the Maharaja once again pointed out that there could be no two opinions on the question of States' participation in the constitution making Assembly. He reiterated his sentiments, earlier expressed, in a message to the Bikaner Legislative Assembly and said "through Bikaner we are proud of India, and in desiring

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1. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. 5, No. 1-August 1947; Mr. K.M. Panikkar's speech dated 7.8.1947 at the inauguration of the Bikaner Chamber of Commerce -

   "His Highness was one of the first to foresee the trend of events. Months before the war ended, when there was no talk of immediate Independence, so early as April 1945, His Highness moved his brother-princes to establish an organisation to work out a scheme for cooperation with British India to share the freedom which he saw clearly was coming to India."

2. Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 30-9-1945 at the Informal Princes' Standing Committee meeting -

   "Another aspect that appears to me of importance is that before very long we shall be discussing how the States are going to fit in the future constitution of India. Public opinion and pressure on the part of the political parties in British India, and very soon after a little more spread of education public opinion within our own States and from our own people, will demand a higher standard of administration and living conditions..... a great surge will come which will wipe off those States which do not march in conformity with the times."

3. Maharaja Sadul Singh's circular letter dated 24.10.1945 to the Princes.

the greatness of India, we yield to none in our patriotism to our mother country and in our anxiety to see her rise to her full stature and fill in her own right her due and honoured place in the comity of nations."[1] He welcomed the statement of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made at the Indian States Peoples Conference held at Udaipur that the approach to the princes should be a friendly one. Bikaner for one had nothing to fear. It was already marching with the times and all necessary reforms were being duly introduced. According to K.M.Panikkar "Bikaner, under its farsighted Ruler" stood "ready and prepared to face the future." Panikkar was confident that Bikaner by virtue of its historical importance, geographical position, size, population, revenue, and its potentialities for the future would be entitled to a position which would ensure her internal sovereignty and autonomy as also give her a voice in all India affairs.[2]

In March, 1946 the Cabinet Mission[3] was appointed "with the intention of making a supreme effort to break the deadlock between Britain and the Indians on the one hand, and Congress and the Muslim League on the other"[4] The Mission was authorised to make decisions on the spot to convince India of Britafn's sincerity in going ahead with their promise of granting Independence. The mission arrived in India on the 23rd March, 1946.

The princes had already been given an assurance that no changes would be affected in their relations with the Crown

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1. Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 12.2.1946 at a Banquet given in his honour by Mr. K.M.Panikkar at Ganga Niwas, fort, Bikaner in connection with the celebrations of the birth of a grandson to the Maharaja.
2. K.M. Panikkar's speech dated 12.2.1946 at a banquet given by him in honour of Maharaja Sadul Singh.
3. The Mission composed of Lord Pethick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. A.V.Alexander.
4. Lennard Mosley; The Last Days of the British Raj, p. 20

or in the rights guaranteed by their treaties or engagements without their consent. This assurance was repeated by Lord Wavell in his letter of the 12th March, 1946, wherein it was affirmed that "there was no intention of making proposals for the entry of States into the Indian set up, on any basis other than that of negotiation."[1] After discussion[2] and correspondence with the Chamber of Princes and its representatives, the Cabinet Mission issued a memorandum dated the 12th May, 1946[3] wherein it said that the Chamber of Princes had confirmed that the Indian States fully shared the country's desire for the immediate attainment by India of her full stature. The memorandum added that the rights of the States which accrued from their relationship with the Crown would no longer exist and the rights surrendered by them to the Crown would revert to them and that the void so caused by the lapse of paramountcy would have to be filled in by the States entering into new relationships. The memorandum further referred to "the desirability of the States, in suitable cases, forming or joining administrative units large enough to enable them to be fitted into the constitutional scheme as also of conducting negotiations with British India."[4] And in the

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1. White Paper on Indian States, p. 28

2. Maharaja Sadul Singh had also been invited to participate in the discussions with the Cabinet Mission and he left Bikaner for Delhi on the 29th March, 1946 for the purpose.

3. White Paper on Indian States, pp. 152-53

4. Ibid, p. 29

Cabinet Mission's plan announced on the 16th May, 1946 the proposals, so far as they concerned the Indian States, were that there should be a Union of India comprising both of British India and the Indian States which should deal with foreign affairs, Defence and communications and that the States should retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union. The representation of the States in the Constituent Assembly was not to exceed 93 and was to be determined by consultation. The States unanimously accepted the plan but not without internal difficulties, and it was as a result of the efforts of Maharaja Sadul Singh that an unanimous decision was possible.[1]

The acceptance of this plan of the 16th May, 1946 was acclaimed by the Maharaja as the greatest step forward that had been taken in the cause of India's march to Independence. According to him the princes were not to be anxious about their position in a free India, only if they realised the significance of the changes and adapted themselves accordingly.[2] So far as the Bikaner State was concerned, he said that he had recently an occasion to meet Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Pandit Nehru and discuss with them the reforms[3] that he was

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1. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. 5, No. 1-August, 1947; Mr. K.M. Panikkar's speech dated 7.8.1947 at the inauguration of the Bikaner Chamber of Commerce -
   "It is not to be thought that this decision was taken without some internal difficulties. There was an influential group of princes and ministers whose approach to the question was not that of an Indian Union but of a Union of Princely India, a third partition which was meant to break up the body of Hindustan into bits and leave it bleeding and incapable..... It was the firmness of His Highness the Maharaja and his friends that nipped in the bud this dangerous move....."
2. Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 27.7.1946 -
   "....The acceptance of the scheme of May 16, proposing a Union of India consisting of both the States and the provinces is the greatest step forward that has been taken in the cause of India's march to Independence..... I have never felt that if the princes and the States take into due consideration the real significance of the changes that are taking place in India now and adjust their mental outlook and policies accordingly, they need not have any apprehensions about their due place in a free India. It has to be clearly visualised that what is happening is in essence a profound transformation."
3. As envisaged under the Bikaner Constitution Act, 1947.

at the time planning to introduce and that their reactions were favourable and friendly.[1]

The Cabinet Mission plan had proposed a single government for India with the centre responsible for Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications only; and for the rest, the country was to be divided into three groups, group A with Hindu majority, group B with Muslim majority and group C where the Muslims would have a small majority. The Muslim League took these proposals as clear cut and precise, and was prepared to accept them. But as soon as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru became the President of the Congress in July, 1946, he expressed the opinion at a press conference that the plan could be modified but asserted that the Congress was "unfettered by agreements and free to meet all situations," as they arose.[2] The Muslim League immediately suspected trickery and treachery and on July 27, 1946 withdrew its acceptance ~~to~~ of the Cabinet Plan. August 16 was declared as the Direct~~ion~~ Action Day and the result was the massacre of Hindus in Calcutta which lit the flame of communal frenzy. In the next one year it enveloped the sub-continent of India and left in its wake a million men, women and children horribly massacred on both sides of the border[3]

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1. Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 27.7.1946 - "Some of you know that before I recently returned from Bombay I was happy to have met Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel and Pandit Nehru. I have had long, heart to heart talks with them about the present political situation in India and in regard to the States generally. I also took the opportunity to explain to them my intentions about constitutional reforms as envisaged by me in the Bikaner State. It pleased me greatly to see as I had expected that their reactions were altogether favourable and friendly. Not only did they congratulate me on the bold step forward that I had taken, but I brought back with me the happy memory that they were watching with keen interest the developments in the State and were eagerly waiting to see the success of the great experiment that I have decided to launch."
2. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad; India Wins Freedom, pp.155 and 162 This led to a reiteration by the Muslim League of their demand for Pakistan and the ultimate partition of India. According to Maulana Azad "the mistake of 1946 proved even more costly."
3. Leonard Mosley; The Last days of the British Raj, pp.33-35

Lord Wavell was appalled, and in order to restore confidence of the Muslim League in the Congress, he called Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi to sign a declaration which ran as follows:-

> "The Congress are prepared in the interests of communal harmony to accept the intention of the statement of 16 May (the Cabinet Mission statement) that provinces cannot exercise any option affecting their membership of the sections or of the groups if formed, until the decision contemplated in paragraph 19 (vii) of the statement of 16 May is taken by the new legislature after the new constitutional arrangements have come into operation and the first general elections have been held."[1]

The result, however, was misunderstanding and ill-will. Lord Wavell had lost the confidence of both the Congress in India and Mr. Attlee in England who over-ruled him by ordering the establishment of the Interim Government without delay and it was sworn in on September 2, 1946. The Constituent Assembly began functioning from the 9th December, 1946. The Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes having, by its statement of the 10th June, 1946 agreed that the Cabinet plan offered a fair basis for negotiations both as to the representation of the States in the Constituent Assembly and as to their ultimate position in the Union, set up a States Negotiation Committee for the purpose.[2] The Constituent Assembly also appointed a similar committee by its resolution dated the 21st December, 1946. The States Negotiation Committee held discussions with its British Indian counterpart on the 8th and 9th February and 1st and 2nd March, 1947.

On the 20th February, 1947 Mr. Attlee had announced in the House of Commons that transfer of power to a responsible Indian Government would be made by June, 1948. Lord Wavell resigned and Lord Mountbatten took over on the 24th March, 1947.

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1. Leonard Mosley; The Last Days of the British Raj, p.43
2. Mr. K.M.Panikkar, Foreign and Political Minister of Bikaner, represented Bikaner on this Committee.

The Maharaja, who was in Delhi, did not however attend the swearing in ceremony[1] but later in the day called on the Viceroy to explain his absence when he pointed out that the Nawab of Bhopal by his attitude towards the interim government was responsible for raising controversial issues in their ranks and expressed the belief that by the Maharaja's group[2] joining the Constituent Assembly, the new regime would be considerably strengthened.[3] The Nawab of Bhopal, the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes at the time, was insisting that no action should be taken by States individually but only collectively and by agreement with the Chancellor.[4] It may be noted that India's firm belief in secularism is seen in a glaring example of negotiations at the time of India's Independence being conducted by the three interested parties viz. the Congress, the Muslim League and the Indian States, by representatives who were all Muslims -Maulana Azad, spokesman for the Congress, Jinnah for the Muslim League and Nawab Hamidullah Khan for the princes.

During the meetings of the Princes Standing Committee held in Bombay in April, 1947 the agreements arrived at by the two negotiating committees (the States Negotiating Committee and its counterpart set up by the Constituent Assembly) were taken up for ratification and approved. However, a difference of opinion arose between the Chancellor and the Maharaja over the time when the States should join the Constituent Assembly. The Chancellor and the majority of the princes were in favour of the States entering the Constituent Assembly at a stage when the Union Constitution was being framed, whereas Maharaja Sadul Singh and his group were in favour of joining immediately.

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1. H.H.the Nawab of Bhopal also did not attend the ceremony.
2. Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Patiala and Gwalior.
3. Campbell; Mission with Mountbatten, p.44
4. Ibid, p. 47

Finding that it was not possible for him to make the princes realise the gravity of the problem, the Maharaja staged his historic walk-out leaving a note for the Chancellor wherein he asked to be excused for not remaining in the Standing Committee any longer as it would place him in an awkward position; he stated that his views on the problems then facing the rulers and the country at large were totally different from those of the Chancellor and the majority of the Standing Committee, and neither could he remain silent nor did he wish to speak anymore on his point of view which he had stressed many a time before Their Highnesses.[1]

The Maharaja issued an appeal to his brother princes the same day stressing that the only safe policy for the States was to work for the creation of as large a section of India as possible which would safeguard both the States and British India in the vacuum that would be created on the withdrawal of the British and which would maintain peace, order and good government and prevent civil strife. He added that a policy of "wait and see" if adopted by the princes would not be in conformity with their declared professions to help India to attain Independence. He, therefore, urged that the Princes should rise to the occasion and be hailed as co-architects of India's Independence and greatness.[2]

The Maharaja's walk out and appeal resulted in a compromise being worked out and ultimately it was decided that the States could join the Constituent Assembly at any stage after the Constituent Assembly had ratified the agreements arrived at between the two negotiating committees. This historic walk-out by the Maharaja broke "Bhopal's game" of evolving a third force and the action was not only acclaimed by all sections of the press[3] but was also eulogized by eminent British Indian leaders.

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 1320/XXI-A, Maharaja Sadul Singh's note dated 1.4.1947-
2. Maharaja Sadul Singh's secret appeal dated 1.4.1947
3. The Times of India, 2.4.1947 and 7.4.1947
   National Standard, 3.4.1947
   Bombay Sentinal, 3.4.1947
   Free Press Journal, 3.4.1947
   The Bombay Chronicle, 4.4.1947

Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel referred to the Maharaja as "one who has taken such a prominent part in the negotiations which preceded the entry of the princes into the polity of the Indian Union and who has stood by the country with steadfast loyalty."[1] And the first President of Independent India has referred to the Maharaja's patriotic move in glowing terms. He added:

> "The great move for the unification of India could materialise primarily because of the goodwill and ready willingness of princes like Maharaja Sadul Singhji to participate in Constitution making and to send their representatives to the Constituent Assembly of India. It was a difficult task, too difficult to be described in words because but for this kind of willful cooperation India might have remained split in several bits. It redounds to the credit of the late Maharaja of Bikaner that by his bold decision he gave a correct and timely lead to other princes. This eventually resulted in the accession of not only Bikaner but also other princely States to India. Therefore, India is, and will remain, indebted to him."
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> ".....When the history of that period is written, it will be recorded therein that at a time when India was faced on the one hand, with the calamity of partition and, on the other, with the dangerous possibility of Balkanisation Maharaja Sadul Singhji prompted by farsightedness and the most patriotic of motives stood firm like a rock and averted that possibility."[2]

Guided by the most patriotic of motives Maharaja Sadul Singh kept up his own plighted word of seeing India attain Independence as also provided the much needed courage to his wavering brother princes; he prevailed upon them from the very beginning, to cooperate to implement the Cabinet Mission plan to which the princes had already promised their support. The

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 1252/IX, Sardar Patel's letter dated 27.1.1950 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.
2. Dr. Rajendra Prasad's speech at Bikaner on 2.9.1954 when he came to unveil the statue of Maharaja Sadul Singh. This statue was historic, as immediately on the Maharaja's demise in 1950 and shortly after integration the people of Bikaner voluntarily and spontaneously raised funds amongst themselves and had this large equestrian statue sculptured and put up at a most commanding place in the city.

allegation of Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan that the stand taken up by the Maharaja was made under pressure was promptly contradicted by the Maharaja who affirmed that the decision taken by him was solely guided by patriotic motives and in the best interests of the nation.[1] His rejoinder was widely applauded by the press.[2] The representative of Bikaner, K.M.Panikkar, took his seat in the Constituent Assembly on the 28th April, 1947.[3]

Meanwhile a grave situation had developed in Kashmir. Sheikh Abdulla had started what is known as the Quit Kashmir movement with the result that he was arrested and a case was

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1. In his statement dated 24.4.1947 to the Associated Press of India, while replying to the allegation of Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan that the States had succumbed to the pressure of Congress, the Maharaja said -

   "I can say that so far as the Bikaner State is concerned and also the other States which have decided to participate in the work of the Constituent Assembly, we decided to do so certainly not due to any pressure of any one, much less the Congress, but because we consider it to be in our own best interests as well as in the greater interests of India. Apart from this, we were prompted entirely by motives of patriotism towards our mother country to do all we could to assist her at this critical moment when far-reaching decisions have to be promptly taken affecting both British India and the States."

2. Indian News Chronicle, 27.4.1947
   Lok Vani, 26.4.1947

3. V.P.Menon; The Story of the Integration of the Indian States, p. 76

   Later, Kr. Jaswant Singhji of Daudsar also represented Bikaner in the Constituent Assembly.
   Also a committee consisting of six members of the Bikaner Legislative Assembly was appointed to be closely associated with the State representative to the Constituent Assembly and keep in touch with its work. These were Pandit Badri Prasad Vyas, Thakur Heer Singh of Sankhu, Sardar Darbara Singh, Chaudhari Moti Ram, Seth Leharchand Sethia, and Sheikh Nisar Ahmad.

instituted against him[1]. Maharaja Sadul Singh, believing as he did in a strong and united India, tried to play his role in easing the situation in Kashmir, wrote to Mahatma Gandhi in June, 1947. Gandhiji, it was reported, was likely to go to Kashmir and the Maharaja suggested that the Mahatma may use his influence in persuading the Sheikh to retract from the position he had originally adopted. He further suggested that if that were not possible, compromise might be tried to prevail upon both the parties to let bygones be bygones and to start with a clean slate. The Maharaja stressed the exigencies of the times and the particular situation obtaining

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1. Sheikh Abdullah on his release from prison in 1964 was the first Indian politician of stature to raise doubts of accession of any Indian State to the Indian Union. The author in his capacity as a member of Parliament and the Maharaja of Bikaner pointed out in a statement released to the press that:

"there was no legal difference between the accession of Bikaner State and Jammu and Kashmir, because the moment the ruler signed the Instrument of Accession, it became 'complete and legally binding on both parties for all times'.

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The please sometimes put forward that the people of the former States have not been consulted at the time of accession is not correct, because in the Indian Independence Act, such a provision does not exist. What was envisaged was that, on the lapse of paramountcy, the ruler of each State was entitled to accede to either of the two newly created Dominions of India and Pakistan. This was the end of the matter'."

He also said that "from his personal experience he knew his father, Maharaja Sadul Singh, acceded to the Indian Union because he knew he carried with him the will of the million and a half people of the State" and that "the same applied to the hundreds of other States too," and he was sure "Kashmir was no exception."

The author added that "the very fact that Sheikh Abdullah himself made a passionate plea for the accession of Jammu and Kashmir State to India, and subsequently for help from the Government of India, set all doubts at rest."

in the country and advocated a compromise solution.[1] Mahatma Gandhi acknowledged the letter and wrote that if he went to Kashmir, he would keep his letter in mind.[2] This not only shows his strong sense of patriotism and duty by the country but also his friendly terms with those who were moulding the destiny of the country.

The gloomy prospect of partition stared India in the face. If the States chose to adopt any path other than that of cooperation following Mr. Attlee's announcement of the 20th February, 1947 regarding the lapse of paramountcy, the dangerous possibility of Balkanisation existed. The first step, therefore, taken by the new government was the creation, on the 5th July, 1947, of the States Department to conduct their relations with the Indian States.[3] Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was appointed Minister incharge of the department and he took V.P.Menon as his Secretary.[4] The immediate problem before the States Department was how to negotiate successfully with the princes in the short time available before the date for the declaration of Dominion Status. Sardar Patel was worried about it as it entailed starting negotiations with the princes all over again. But Mr. Menon at once set Sardar Patel's mind at ease by suggesting that the princes be asked to accede only in respect of three items, namely, Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Communications. Sardar Patel took the earliest opportunity to enunciate the policy of his department and appealed to the princes to accede on these three subjects of common interest and assured the princes that in other subjects their autonomous existence would be scrupulously respected. He further assured

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 914/XVIII, Maharaja Sadul Singh's letter dated 18.6.1947 to Mahatma Gandhi, Appendix XXXIV.
2. Ibid, Mahatma Gandhi's letter dated 19.6.1947 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.
3. White Paper on Indian States, p. 33
4. Ibid.
   Sardar Patel was to work in consultation with Sardar Abdul Rab Nishtar and Mr. Ikram Ullah was appointed Joint Secretary. The idea was that on the formation of the two Dominions of India and Pakistan, the department could easily be split up and continue to function in both the dominions without any dislocation.

them that it was not the desire of the Congress to interfere in any manner whatsoever with the domestic affairs of the States and that the policy of his department in conducting relations with the States would not be one of domination, and that they wished the princes well and were not their enemies.[1]

The Maharaja who realised the grave consequences if the princes decided to remain outside the Dominion of India,[2] immediately welcomed this announcement and said that he was whole-heartedly in agreement with it and that a statement showing greater goodwill and friendliness towards the States could hardly have been better. The Majority of the States had already joined the Constituent Assembly, but the Maharaja felt that the statement, coming as did at such a momentous juncture, would lead others to join at an early date. He urged his brother princes to grasp the hand of friendship so extended and give their full support to the Congress so that India might attain her goal quickly.[3]

The task of carrying out negotiations with the princes was entrusted to Lord Mountbatten who was the Crown representativ The Viceroy summoned a full meeting of the Chamber of Princes on the 25th July, 1947 at which the author was present as a spectator. The Viceroy, who was looking handsome in his naval uniform, made out a strong case for the States acceding to the appropriate Dominion in regard to the three subjects, assuring them at the same time that this would involve no financial liability and that there would be no further encroachment on their internal sovereignty. The Viceroy's persuasions

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1. Hindustan Times, 7.7.1947
2. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol.5,No.1-August 1947,pp.11-12; speech delivered by Maharaja Sadul Singh on 15.8.1947 at a State banquet to celebrate India's attainment of Independence:-
   "With the lapse of paramountcy it was open to the States of India to stand aside and refuse to associate with the new Dominion. Legally we could all have been independent today, for the suzerainty which we had surrendered to the British Crown had reverted to us under the Indian Independence Act and we could have stood aside and not accede to the Indian Dominion. A moment's consideration would show how disastrous the consequences would have been. It would have meant India breaking up into small fragments..... from the beginning my mind was made up. With full knowledge of its implications, I decided without hesitation to cooperate with those elements in India which were working for the establishment of a stable central government and oppose with determination any forces that might come in the way of such consummation."
3. Maharaja Sadul Singh's press statement dated 8.7.1947, Appendix XXXV.

succeeded and a majority of the princes signed the Instrument of Accession,[1] Maharaja Sadul Singh being the first to do so.[2] His services in uniting India were referred to in glowing terms by Sardar Patel while expressing his gratitude to the Maharaja for all the assistance and cooperation received from him. Sardar Patel added that at a time when the whole scheme was being sabotaged, it was the Maharaja of Bikaner who saved the situation by his unswerving loyalty to the cause of united India. He said -

> ".....Now that all the fully empowered States who were invited to accede to the Indian Dominion, have, with the exception of Hyderabad and Junagadh, signed the Instrument of Accession which was finalised by the Negotiating Committee of the Rulers and States' representatives, may I, on behalf of my colleagues, myself and the States Department, say how grateful we are for all the assistance and cooperation received from Your Highness during those difficult days. None knows better than Your Highness in what atmosphere we all had to work and what intrigues we had to encounter, not only from almost the whole of the outgoing Political Department, but also, I regret to say, from some of our own countrymen including members of the Princely Order and their ministers. Attempts were being made again and again, to sabotage the whole scheme and thus to give a death blow to our ideal of a strong, united and powerful India, but, fortunately for us all, those efforts failed, thanks to the unswerving loyalty to the cause of united India shown by Your Highness and other patriotic rulers and ministers of States. I am fully conscious of the trouble taken by you to dispel doubts and misgivings deliberately created to mislead the Princely Order. It indeed gives me pleasure to recall on this occasion the support then received from you....."
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> "....Also thanks for most valuable assistance and cooperation which I have received from you in my difficult task. Your lead has invariably been well times and effective."[3]

A Standstill Agreement which provided for the continuance, for the time being, of all subsisting agreements & administrative

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1. The Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession on 7.8.1947
2. Leonard Mosley, Op.cit. p. 175 -
   "The first of them was the Maharaja of Bikaner who had once been an old friend of the Viceroy. He put his name to the papers with a dramatic gesture."
   V.P.Menon, however, mentions that the Maharaja of Baroda was the first to sign the Instrument of Accession.
3. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No: 1252/IX, Sardar Patel's letter dated 5.9.1947 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.

arrangements in matters of common concern to the State and the Dominion of India was also signed about the same time.[1]

The country-wide rejoicings on the attainment of Independence were celebrated with full enthusiasm in Bikaner on the 15th August, 1947. The flag hoisting ceremony was performed by the Maharaja personally at the Stadium. In the evening a State banquet was held at the Lallgarh Palace to celebrate the function at which Panikkar, while proposing the Maharaja's toast said: "we are all proud that the Maharaja has been one of the architects of the Independence of India."[2] The Maharaja in his reply said that the day's celebrations were in honour of a great and historic event and that he had done his duty to India, to the States as a whole and to his State and his beloved people.[3]

While Maharaja Sadul Singh accepted the assurances of Sardar Patel open heartedly, time was to prove that not all the assurances given by free India's representatives were to be honoured in the exact spirit in which they were made. Little did the Maharaja know of the future that was in store for the States. Perhaps he knew better than the others who were forced by circumstances to submit to the inevitable as will be seen later. At this stage the author was in very close contact with his father, the Maharaja, attending many important meetings with Indian leaders along with him and shared his genuine good faith in our leaders.

With the partition of Punjab, very vital interests of Bikaner were at stake. The Ferozepore Headworks controlled regulated supply of water to the Gang Canal. And if the Headworks went to Pakistan, it was apprehended that the interests

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1. K.M. Panikkar, Prime Minister, Bikaner, signed the Standstill Agreement on 7.8.1947, Appendix XXXVI.
2. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. 5, No.1, August, 1947, p. 16; Panikkar's speech on 15.8.1947 while proposing the Maharaja's toast at the State banquet.
3. Ibid, p. 10; Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 15.8.1947 responding to the toast.

of the State in the waters of the Sutlej would be prejudicially affected. Thus when it became known through private sources that the Muslim League was likely to put forward claims for the control of regulation of waters from the Ferozepore Headworks, the Prime Minister of Bikaner addressed a letter to Sardar Patel apprising him of it and pointed out that by national partition, Ferozepore had definitely to be within the Indian area. He also added that over one thousand square miles of Bikaner territory was irrigated by the Sutlej Valley Canals and if the Muslim League's claims were accepted, the interests of the State would very much suffer. He, therefore, urged upon the Sardar both as the Minister incharge of the States Department as also Member of the High Council of Partition, to ensure that the Ferozepore Headworks were entirely controlled by India.[1] The Maharaja also sent telegrams to the Viceroy, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Patel on the 7th July, 1947 requesting that in the arrangements that were being made, it might be ensured that the interests of the Bikaner State were not interfered with and the rights of the State were adequately safeguarded as on these rights depended the entire economic position and prosperity of the State.[2] Sardar Patel replied that appropriate steps were being taken and assured the Maharaja that the mutual interest (of India and the Bikaner State) would be fully safeguarded.[3] The Viceroy asked the Maharaja by telegram to request the Punjab

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2696-B/LIV pt. II- Bhakra Dam Project; K.M.Panikkar's letter No. 464 C/386 dated 5.7.1947 to Sardar Patel.
2. Ibid, Telegrams dated 7.7.1947 from Maharaja Sadul Singh.
3. Ibid, Telegram dated 7.7.1947 from Sardar Patel to Maharaja Sadul Singh and letter dated 7.7.1947 from Sardar Patel to Mr. Panikkar.

Boundary Commission to afford the Bikaner State an opportunity to present its case, adding that in any case the Standstill Agreements entered into should provide sufficient safeguard till any modifications were agreed to by mutual agreements.[1] A telegram was sent, accordingly, to the President, Punjab Boundary Commission, Lahore in which he was also informed that Lala Kanwar Sain, Chief Engineer Irrigation of the State and Bakshi Tek Chand were being deputed to present the Bikaner case.[2] Soon after, a memorandum was presented to the Punjab Boundary Commission on the 25th July, 1947.[3]

The Viceroy wrote to the Maharaja on the 6th July, that he had met Panikkar, Bikaner's Prime Minister, and realised the difficulty about the repudiation of some of the administrative agreements with the States. He informed the Maharaja that a proviso had since been inserted in clause 7 of the Bill which met the point at issue.[4]

On news reaching the Maharaja that the Boundary Commission was likely to award Ferozepur Tehsil to Western Punjab, the Maharaja again telegraphed the Viceroy stressing the importance of retaining the Headworks at Ferozepur in India as the economic life of the State depended entirely upon it urging that his Prime Minister and Chief Engineer Irrigation, might be afforded an opportunity to place facts before the Viceroy.[5] It must be said to the credit of Lord Mountbatten especially, and to others concerned as well, that the efforts of Bikaner were finally crowned with success and a just cause upheld. Ferozepore remained in India.

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2696-B/LIV, pt. II-Bhakra Dam Project; Lord Mountbatten's telegram dated 17.7.1947 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.
2. Ibid, Maharaja Sadul Singh's telegram dated 18.7.1947 to the President, Punjab Boundary Commission, Lahore.
3. Ibid, Lala Kanwar Sain's note dated 26.7.1947
4. Ibid, Extract from Lord Mountbatten's letter of 6.7.1947 to the Maharaja as noted in Private Secretary's order No. 570-C dated 28.7.1947
5. Ibid, Maharaja Sadul Singh's telegram to Lord Mountbatten, dated 10.8.1947

And at midnight of the 14th August, 1947, India, after a long struggle, became a Dominion and attained freedom with Lord Mountbatten as its first Governor-General. Nehru reflected: "Long years ago we made a tryst with Destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom." [1]

Freedom for India was now an accomplished fact. The struggle for freedom had resulted in a bloodless transfer of power. The rejoicings, however, were to be short-lived. Communal hatred triggered off by Jinnah's Direct Action Day call,[2] a year earlier had lit the flame of communal bitterness in the sub-continent of India which was to take a toll of around one million men, women and children who were killed on both sides of the border. The partition of India which was based essentially on a two-nation theory necessarily implied exchange of population based on religion. Furthermore, the Muslims had been made to imbibe the notion that Pakistan was meant to be the land for Muslims alone. The result was that the exchange of population was made a very difficult task. In Pakistan, all sorts of tortures were being practised to force the minorities out. The migrants brought with them harrowing tales of horror and shame. A repercussion was only inevitable. The feelings of the Hindus and Sikhs in India were aroused to such a pitch that all the efforts of the Government of India which had secularism as its ideal, could not prevent retaliation. This resulted in unprecedented mass migration of Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan into India and of the Muslims to Pakistan.

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1. Campbell; Mission With Mountbatten, p. 157; Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's statement dated 14. 8. 1947 in the Constituent Assembly.

2. Leonard Mosley; The Last Days of the British Raj, pp.29, 32
"What we have done today is the most historic act in our history. Never have we in the whole history of the League done anything except by constitutional methods and by constitutionalism. But now we are obliged into this position This day we bid good-bye to constitutional methods -- today we have also forged a pistol and are in a position to use it."
---Jinnah.
"Blood-shed and disorder are not necessarily evil in themselv if resorted to for a noble cause" wrote Suhrawardy in an article in the Statesman of 5.8.1946

Bikaner, being the most strategically placed on the border and having a close on 200 mile long border along the newly formed State of Pakistan, was, with its sister State of Jodhpur which too had a large common border with Pakistan, ~~was~~ compelled by circumstances to help in this mass migration, struggling, with all the resources at its command, to give safe passage to fleeing humanity from both sides of the border without loss of life. This was indeed a very complicated task and it was only through the agency of a first-class administration imbued with the tradition of secularism, a tradition which the Bikaner State had maintained for five centuries, that close to seven or eight lacs of Muslims from British India were safely escorted through the State to Pakistan. This unprecedented exodus entailed heavy demand on the State transportation system as also on the administrative machinery.

Emotions were running high on both sides and the Maharaja rallied to the call of fleeing men, women, and children, irrespective of caste and community with a firm resolve to save as many lives as he possibly could. It, therefore, goes to the credit of both the Maharaja and his administration that the super-human task of protecting the millions crossing over from one country to another was accomplished with the least possible blood-shed when across the borders in British India as well as in Pakistan lives of the refugees had very little value. Arrangements[1] to combat this vast problem created many other problems in turn for the local residents of Bikaner as considerable accommodation and food had to be arranged for the refugees both coming into India from Pakistan and going from India to Pakistan, as most of the refugees came practically with no personal belongings. What made the task perhaps easy for the Bikaner State was that various communities in Bikaner

1. The details of the exodus of refugees and the arrangements made therewith are based on a statement of Kanwar Jaswant Singh of Daudsar who was looking after the arrangements at the time.

had lived in complete harmony for centuries and the communal hatred which had flared up in the rest of India did not affect the premier States of Rajputana to any appreciable extent.

When the exodus of Hindus started from Pakistan and came over to India, the Bikaner State was requested by the Government of India to receive them, if possible, as a temporary measure, till they were settled in due course of time. In some cases the refugees from Pakistan to India even arrived by air, sometime by special air lifts. As far as the Hindus directly entering Bikaner from Bhawalpur and nearby places were concerned, they were received with open arms; but there were other Hindus who had entered East Punjab, and who were to be temporarily accommodated, and the Bikaner State considered it its duty to cooperate with the Government of India and agreed to receive such Hindu refugees. Camps were opened for such refugees at a number of places. Kolayat,[1] where there were a large number of Dharamshalas, became one of the centres and the owners of Dharamshalas were prevailed upon to throw them open and put them at the disposal of the refugees. For food and other necessities of life, the Government of Bikaner made the fullest possible arrangements. Maharaja Sadul Singh even placed his own residence with its vast grounds at Sujangarh, at the disposal of the refugees from Pakistan.

When the refugees from Bhawalpur began to pour into the adjoining Ganganagar district and brought the heartrending tales of holocaust and carnage through which they had passed on their way to Bikaner State, the local Hindus and Sikhs were so enraged that they were preparing to retaliate. This informatic having been conveyed to the Maharaja, he immediately ordered

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1. The word 'Kolayat' is derived from 'Kapilayat'. The town of Kolayat is situated about 30 miles South-west of Bikaner. The village has a tank with Kapil Muni's temple on its bank. The tank is considered as sacred as ~~the~~ Pushkar near Ajmer and an annual fair is held in which people from all parts of the country come in thousands.

units of the Bikaner army to be sent to Ganganagar to see that none amongst his Muslim subjects were to be harmed.

When the exodus of Hindus from Bhawalpur in Pakistan assumed large dimensions and tales of horrors committed on them began to flow in, it was considered advisable by the Bikaner State that the Muslims who were settled all over the Gang Canal area for final transfer to Pakistan be concentrated at one or two places. In due course it was felt that it was impossible for the Muslims living in the border area to continue to stay there. They were advised to move over to Bhawalpur and safe passage under State military escort was guaranteed to them. As a result of strict vigilance by the State Government and its strict attitude in the matter, only one stray instance of assault took place. Beyond this single incident none other happened, and thousands of Muslims living on the border were given safe passage to Pakistan.

The general upheaval in the country was having repercussions in other parts of Bikaner where the Muslims were residing in large numbers. Mention may be made here of Churu[1] where the seths and Sahukars were having in their employment large number of Muslims. When the atmosphere was fouled by communal hatred, the seths and other responsible citizens of Churu started boycotting the Muslims. This made their life very difficult and, before going to Pakistan, they came in thousands to Bikaner to place their tale of woe before the Maharaja. He was greatly pained to learn that the majority community behaved in that manner. These thousands of Muslims of Churu were given shelter and food in Bikaner and a special department was opened to ensure that both the types of refugees i.e. Hindus and Muslims- Hindus from Pakistan and Muslims who came to Bikaner to migrate to Pakistan - were looked after at Bikaner camps. The Maharaja

1. Churu is situated at a distance of about hundred miles East of Bikaner. The town is a district headquarter and has a population of about forty thousand including many multi-millionaires. It is said that it was founded by a Jat named Chuhru about 1620. The town has many beautiful buildings and wells.

sent Kanwar Jaswant Singh, Public Works Minister, to Churu to persuade the Mahajans to take back the Muslims who had left, and see that they were not harrassed in any way. The Mahajans having acceded to the Maharaja's wishes the Muslim residents of Churu were sent back by special trains and their possessions restored.

Similarly at Anupgarh, a border Tehsil headquarter in the Ganganagar district, the Muslims wanted to continue to stay because their number there was a substantial one but the Hindus of the neighbouring villages, with the connivance of some narrow-minded officials, began to harrass them and leaving their properties behind, they also moved over to Bhawalpur, an area which was only six miles from Anupgarh in Bikaner State. Again Kanwar Jaswant Singh was deputed to assure the migrants that if they chose to come back to their homes, their safety would be fully secured and special army personnel would be detailed for the purpose; those officials who were found guilty were punished under the orders of the Maharaja. Meanwhile some local rowdy element in Sujangarh and the Hindu refugees from Pakistan indulged in some acts of rowdism as a result of which the local Muslim residents migrated to Ladnu and Jaswantgarh, border towns in Jodhpur State. On hearing this, the Maharaja immediately rushed senior officers and military units by special train to Sujangarh and order was restored. The Maharaja also pressed the Government of India to take back the Hindu refugees whose activities could not be tolerated by the Bikaner State, and losses suffered by the Muslims at their hands were compensated for.

A large number of Muslims from Bikaner State moved over to Pakistan under the illusion that they had found their homeland and heaven on earth. They had gone there against the advice of the Government of Bikaner who had ensured them complete protection if they wished to continue to stay . Soon after their arrival in Pakistan they were disillusioned and their life became miserable. On hearing their tales of

suffering, it was declared that they were welcome back home. As the parties returned to Bikaner they were resettled and those who had badly suffered were even given financial help, which, it is presumed, was possibly done nowhere else in India. The Bikaner State had to live upto its traditions of secularism and religious tolerance.

The Bikaner administration's efficiency in helping the migration of Muslims to Pakistan without loss of life had so impressed the other westward fleeing Muslims from the rest of India, who had gathered on the border of Bikaner, that they insisted on crossing over through the Bikaner State on account of the security of which they felt so assured. The Bikaner government with its experience of the situation guaranteed safe passage to the migrants. They were handed over at the State border; and it goes to the credit of Bikaner that lacs of people were safely escorted to the Pakistan border without any untoward incident.[1] When the communal holocaust began to subside in both countries, the Bikaner State could proudly look back with satisfaction on the major humanitarian task so well done. According to Kanwar Jaswant Singh, the Maharaja was congratulated for his great work by both the leaders of India as well as the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

It has already been stated in the previous chapter that in order to further lessen the sufferings of his people and to develop the State economically, Maharaja Ganga Singh had been strenuously trying for the materialisation of the Bhakra Dam Project. But, the project could not see the light of day during his life time. Maharaja Sadul Singh, with his burning desire for the well-being of his people, therefore, took up the task from where it was left by his great father. The attitude of the Punjab Government had changed again. It

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1. Leonard Mosley; Op.cit. p. 244
"600,000 dead, 14,000,000 driven from their homes, 100,000 young girls kidnapped by both sides, forcibly converted or sold on the auction block."

became known that the scheme of 1940 prepared by Rao Bahadur Khosla in which Bikaner was assured a definite share, was being discontinued. The Maharaja therefore addressed the Premier of the Punjab on the subject[1] only to hear in reply that there were so many claims to the waters of this project that its allocation presented some difficulty.[2]

The Maharaja also wrote to and met Sir Evan Jenkins, the Governor of the Punjab but with no satisfactory results. On the contrary the Punjab Government opposed the giving of water from the Bhakra Dam to the Bikaner State. The Maharaja thereupon took up the matter with Sardar Patel, Shri Gadgil and the Union Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. At one of the meetings with Pandit Nehru in this connection, the author accompanied the Maharaja, his father. As a result of these efforts he was assured by the Union Prime Minister that he was convinced that the Bikaner State should have its share in the Bhakra Dam project and that he would do everything in his power to see that it was done.[3] Though the benefits could not be reaped during the Maharaja's life time, it is however a great consolation that his efforts and the efforts of his father, Maharaja Ganga Singh, as a result of due and sympathetic consideration by the Central and Provincial governments, were ultimately crowned with success and today the water is already flowing in a part of the Canal. It may, however, be mentioned here that whereas the 1939 scheme envisaged to command an area of 12 lakh acres, the area which is now actually to benefit by this project will be only 4,17,000 acres.

In 1948, a few months after the attainment of Independence by India, Lord and Lady Mountbatten visited Bikaner when the Governor-General took the opportunity to invest Maharaja Sadul Singh with the insignia of the Grand Commander of the Most

1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2696-B/LIV, part II- Maharaja Sadul Singh's letter dated 5.10.1946 to Sir Khizar Hyat Khan.
2. Ibid, Sir Khizar Hayat Khan's letter No. 71-PM, dated November, 1946 to the Maharaja.
3. Ibid, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's letter dated 12.7.1948 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.

Exalted Order of the Star of India. This was perhaps the last of the formal functions held in Bikaner in honour of a representative of the King, in India. Maharaja Sadul Singh and Lord Mountbatten had known each other since childhood and welcoming the distinguished visitor the Maharaja referred to their early acquaintance, adding that whatever the relations of India and England might be, he was confident that their personal friendship would continue to the last. Both Maharaja Sadul Singh and Lord Mountbatten had served together on the staff of the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIII, when he visited India in 1922. The two had in the intervening period, kept in close touch and addressed each other intimately by their first-names, Lord Mountbatten referring to the Maharaja as 'Hiru' which was the pet name given to him by Maharaja Ganga Singh, and the Maharaja referring to Lord Mountbatten as 'Dicky'. This personal friendship developed further during the viceroylty of Lord Mountbatten.[1]

In his reply to the welcome speech, Lord Mountbatten spoke of the Maharaja as being one of his lifelong friends, the friendship having first been formed when the Maharaja was five and he, seven. And referring to the period of his viceroylty, he said that almost the first official interview he had on arrival in India was the one with the Maharaja in March, 1947 adding that the wise, cooperative and helpful attitude the Maharaja then displayed gave him a new confidence about a satisfactory solution of fitting the States into the future set up of India.[2] In the Viceroy's own words -

> "His Highness was the first ruler who realised the part which the princes could play in the future by sending

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1. Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 15.1.1948 -
   ".....I have alluded to my lifelong friendship with Lord Mountbatten. It was when he and I were no more than children playing with toys that we were thrown together and, if I may say so, the affection and friendship that happily have developed between us have only increased with years. I have no doubt that whatever the political relations of our country with England, and I myself feel confident that they will be of the most intimate character, our personal friendship will continue to the end of our lives."
2. Lord Mountbatten's speech at the Investiture Darbar at the Lallgarh Palace, Bikaner, on 15.1.1948.

representatives to the Constituent Assembly to help frame the new constitution of India. Likewise His Highness was the first ruler to support my proposals for obtaining the accession of States to their neighbouring Dominion."

"It must be remembered that on the day of transfer of power the tie that previously held the States to British India was removed; for that tie had depended on the paramountcy of the British Crown. On that day I gave up two entirely separate functions, namely, that of Viceroy and that of Crown Representative. In the first capacity I dealt with States; and it was a fact that both these offices were always held by one and the same man that had really linked the States with British India. With the disappearance of both these offices, India was in imminent danger of fragmentation."

".....the statesmanship and patriotism displayed by the Maharaja of Bikaner in giving a lead in announcing his accession to the Dominion of India without a moment of doubt or suspicion, cannot therefore be praised too highly."

"My Government have been particularly appreciative of His Highness' statesmanlike actions, and I am more than delighted that His Majesty the King, in view of these actions as well as the past record of His Highness, was pleased to make him a Knight Grant Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India."[1]

Lord Mountbatten's visit ended with an informal Imperial Sand grouse shooting camp at Gajner which was greatly enjoyed by the Viceroy who himself is a fine shot. Lord Mountbatten was accompanied by Lady Mountbatten, and his two daughters, Lady Petricia Brabourne and Lady Pamela Mountbatten.[2]

Soon after, a great calamity befell the Nation. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, was shot dead on the 30th January, 1948 and the whole country was suddenly plunged into grief. As soon as the Maharaja heard of the tragic news, he

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1. Lord Mountbatten's speech at Bikaner, dated 15.1.1948
2. Bikaner's Imperial sandgrouse shoot has become world famous and every new Viceroy during the period of Maharaja Ganga Singh and Maharaja Sadul Singh, visited Bikaner for a grouse shoot at Gajner, only 21 miles away from Bikaner where a lake like an 'Oasis' exists with beautiful palaces and a large wild game preserve. It was once wittily remarked "Bikaner by the grace of Grouse" had achieved so much progress. The Prince of Wales, later King Edward the VIII, King George V and King George VII all of them had visited Bikaner and shot grouse as guests of Maharaja Ganga Singh. It was not an uncommon sight to see as many as 200 important foreign and Indian guests coming every year to take part in these famous shoots. Maharaja Ganga Singh was able to use these precious contacts for the betterment of the Bikaner

sent many telegrams of condolence, including those to Lord Mountbatten, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and others. He also immediately sent telegraphic instructions to his Master of the Household Lt. Col. Thakur Kishan Singh and to Capt. K.P.U.Menon, Foreign & Political Secretary, Government of Bikaner, who were in Delhi at the time to represent him at the funeral functions. Besides, he ordered State mourning[1] and the holding of mass prayers at the Stadium at 4.00 p.m. on the 31st January, 1948. The Maharaja led the prayers personally and was visibly moved. On this occasion the Maharaja wore a white turban, a symbol of mourning and which is only worn by the ruler in the case of the death of an elder in the immediate members of the family, and never otherwise. This departure from custom shows the veneration with which Gandhiji was held by Maharaja Sadul Singh and the people of Bikaner.

The accession of the Indian States to the Dominion of India having been secured as a first step, the Government of India now launched upon a programme of complete integration on the ground that the people of Indian States desired to achieve the same measure of freedom as the people in the provinces enjoyed. This desire, it was said, was abundantly clear in the various political movements which found momentum in the States. Another reason advanced was that the rulers of the smaller States were not in a position to bring about the desired administrative reforms for want of resources to maintain the requisite machinery. The position therefore, resolved into grouping them into sizeable units by merging them with either the neighbouring provinces, or converting them into centrally administered areas.[2] With the passage of time, the process was

1. Bikaner Rajpatra dated 31.1.1948
2. Immediately after the integration of the Indian States, the new States Unions were formed into what was known as the Part B States. Rajasthan remained a part B State under a Rajpramukh for some years when the Rajpramukh was replaced by a Governor and Rajasthan and some other Unions raised on par with Part A States. There was also a third category of Part C States e.g. Tripura, Ajmer and even the Union of Himachal Pradesh. These part C States were centrally administered.

extended to encompass the major States as well by creating new viable units by the formation of Unions of States.[1] A special feature of these Unions was the provision for a Rajpramukh as the constitutional head of the State and in many cases made for life time later on. The successor to the life Rajpramukh was to be elected by the Council of Rulers. But the institution did not last long.

This was going back upon the solemn assurances given at the time the accession of the States was sought for. The tide of times had changed. The process of integration started avowedly with the consent of the princes, but a consent which circumstances did not permit them to withhold. In this connection it is interesting to note the views of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, who once said that "when Swaraj is attained, there will be a relation of mutual aid and cooperation, and destructive conflict will be a thing of the past. British India under Swaraj will not wish for the destruction of the Indian States but will be helpful to them."[2]

Even the eighteen States[3] which the Government of India had at first declared as those satisfying the conditions as viable units of the Indian union and whose names were listed in the relevant schedule of the Draft Constitution[4] placed before the Constituent Assembly, ultimately lost their separate entity as the process of integration and merger progressed and in good time before the Constitution was adopted.

During the year 1948, Maharaja Sadul Singh had to visit Delhi very frequently, almost every month and on many of these occasions the author also accompanied him. Some of these visits were in response to the call of the Viceroy and on some of these occasions he even sent his plane to fetch the Maharaja. One

1. White Paper on Indian States, pp.175-77
   Sardar Patel's statement of 16.12.1947; also pp.38-39.
2. M.K.Gandhi; The Indian States Problem, pp. 9-10
3. Bikaner was one of the eighteen viable States.
4. Kanwar Jaswant Singh of Daudsar's affidavit.

such occasion which the author distinctly remembers was in May 1948 when the party accompanying Maharaja Sadul Singh was fairly large and two aeroplanes had to be used. Another occasion was in June 1948 in connection with the enquiry into allegations against the ruler of Faridkot when the rulers of Gwalior, Bikaner, Jaipur and Patiala had been called to Delhi for the purpose. The author distinctly remembers this meeting at which C.Rajgopalachari, the Governor-General designate was present during the meetings, Maharaja Sadul Singh had raised the point that neither the Governor-General, nor anybody else could arrest the ruler of Faridkot unless he was deposed.

The process of integration began with the rulers of the Chhatisgarh and Orissa States ceding to the Dominion Government full and exclusive authority, jurisdiction and powers for and in relation to the governance of their States by agreements signed on the 14th December, 1947 and subsequent dates. The administration of these States was made over to the Governments of the Central Provinces and Orissa on the 1st January, 1948.[1] In view of the adverse press criticism of the policy of merger of the States Ministry, V.P.Menon was sent by Sardar Patel to go and see Gandhiji and Pandit Nehru and convince them of the justice of the action taken. According to Mr. Menon, Gandhiji "professed himself entirely satisfied".[2] This action on the part of the Dominion Government naturally created apprehensions in the minds of the rulers and when some of them met Lord Mountbatten at a conference on the 7th January, 1948, this question was raised. Maharaja Sadul Singh was also present at the conference. During the conference, V.P. Menon pointed out that the principle of merger would not be applied to those States which had individual representation in the Constituent Assembly.[3] And yet what followed soon belied these professions.

1. White Paper on Indian States, pp.40-41
2. V.P.Menon; The Story of the Integration of the Indian States, p. 163
3. Ibid, p. 164.

The Indian States fell into three distinct categories. There were old established States which were in existence before the Muslim or British rule in India. Another class consisted mainly of the States with Muslim dynasties which were formed by the nobles or viceroys of the foreign rulers. The third category consisted of the newer States, which the British recognised during the final stages of the consolidation of their power. Bikaner belonged to the first category.

Rajputana consisted mostly of the old established States which had treaties of mutual amity and defensive alliance with the Paramount British Power. It may be recalled that there were only forty States altogether throughout India which had entered into such treaties with the Paramount Power. Therefore it was natural that the shock of the policy of the new Government of hastening integration and merger was indeed great. Rajputana too could not escape this process which was rapidly growing. Its integration was completed in four stages.

The first united State of Rajasthan,[1] consisting of nine[2] smaller States in the south-east was inaugurated on 25th March, 1948 with Maharao Bhim Singh of Kota[3] as the Rajpramukh and Kota as the capital of the union. Shortly afterwards, Maharana Bhupal Singh of Mewar (Udaipur), the ruler of a most ancient and senior-most State in Rajputana and a viable one, expressed willingness to join the Rajasthan union and this second Rajasthan union was inaugurated on 18th April, 1948 with the Maharana of Mewar[4] as the Rajpramukh during his life time and the Maharao of Kota as the senior Up-Rajpramukh. Udaipur became the capital of the new union.

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1. White Paper on Indian States, p. 53
2. Banswara, Bundi, Dungarpur, Jhalawar, Kishangarh, Kota, Partabgarh, Shahpura and Tonk.
3. Maharao Bhim Singh of Kota is married to the author's aunt and daughter of Maharaja Ganga Singh.
4. The author's sister is married to the present Maharana Bhagwati Singhji of Udaipur who succeeded to the gaddi of Mewar on the demise of Maharana Bhupal Singh.

The four States of Alwar, Bharatpur, Dholpur and Karauli were integrated into a new union known as the Matsya Union and it was inaugurated on 18th March, 1948. The Maharana of Dholpur became the Rajpramukh of Matsya Union and Bharatpur the capital. On 15th May, 1949 the Matsya Union was integrated with Greater Rajasthan.

The three old established major and viable States of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner, together with the ancient State of Jaisalmer, stood out till the last.[1] The Ministry of States therefore, soon initiated negotiations for the merger of these major and viable States for the formation of a Greater Rajasthan union. The negotiations were protracted, several meetings took place jointly and severally between the three rulers and V.P. Menon, representative of the Ministry of States, at Delhi, Bikaner, Jaipur and Jodhpur. The author was present at most of these meetings. It soon became apparent that the merger was inevitable and in the hope that this would be in the interests of the people of the States and the greater good of the country these four rulers agreed to form the greater Rajasthan union. On the 14th January, 1949 Sardar Patel announced at a public meeting at Udaipur that the rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner had agreed in principle to integration.[2] The Greater Rajasthan union was inaugurated on March 30, 1949 by Sardar Patel. The Maharana of Udaipur became the Maha-Rajpramukh for life- a functionless post specially created for the Maharana, Jaipur the Rajpramukh[3] for life; Maharao Bhim Singh of Kota the Senior Up-Rajpramukh, the Maharajas of Jodhpur and Bundi being the other Up-Rajpramukhs. Neither of the Junior

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1. V.P.Menon; The Story of the Integration of the Indian States, p. 250 -

   "The rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner were keen to preserve the identity of their States but bigger States than theirs had been either merged with provinces or formed into unions and it was difficult to leave them alone."

2. Ibid, p. 251.
3. The Rajpramukh was also the Commander-in-Chief of the Rajastha forces. The institution of Rajpramukhship ended and with that the Council of Rulers came to an end in Rajasthan. Until the abolition of Rajpramukh and Rajasthan being raised to a Part A status, the Rajpramukh convened yearly meetings of the Rajasthan rulers. The legal position of the Council of rulers is very much doubtful because the covenants lay down the formation of such a union but no subsequent withdrawal of this Council has taken place. No meetings have,however, been convened of the Council, nor has a president been elected since the post of Rajpramukh ended.

Up-Rajpramukhs, however, took the oath of office. Jaipur became the capital of the United State of Rajasthan. The Rajasthan union for strange reasons started off with two serious aeroplane accidents involving the key figure in this drama, the Maharaja of Jaipur just a few weeks before the integration t of Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer into Greater Rajasthan, when he was nearly killed and his plane destroyed, and the force-landing by Sardar Patel who accompanied the Maharaja of Jodhpur in an Air-force plane, on a river bed, and narrowly escaped injuries while on their way to inaugurate the Greater Rajasthan union. On the 7th April, 1949 the administration of the Bikaner State was handed over to the new Government of Rajasthan[1] when a cash balance of Rs.4.87 crores[2] was transferred to the newly formed United State of Rajasthan, this being the highest amount amongst all the States of Rajasthan. Besides, all the assets of the Bikaner State Railway were made over and these included in particular the transfer of about nine crore worth of railway line and rolling stock to the Central Government.

The Instruments of Merger and the Covenants while providing for the transfer of power from the rulers to the Rajpramukh, also provided for the retention by them of their private properties and guaranteed to them succession to their gaddis, the enjoyment of their rights and privileges and a privy purse as fixed upon for them and their successors.[3] Steps were

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1. Prime Minister Bikaner's office file No. 49 of 1948 (in the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner), telegram dated 7.4.1949 from the Maharaja (at Bombay) to the Rajpramukh, Jaipur -

   "In accordance with article six of the Covenant for the reconstitution of the United State of Rajasthan I hand over to Your Highness the administration of the Bikaner State with effect from the 7th April, 1949"

2. The cash balances transferred by some premier States were - (1) Bikaner 4.87 crores; (2) Jodhpur 4.75 crores; (3)Jaipur 4.58 crores; (4) Kota 3.34 crores; (5) Udaipur (figures not available).

3. Letters of succession and fixing of Privy Purse on the author's succession to the gaddi might be of interest, Plate XXXVIII and Plate XXXIX.

taken to define the private properties of the rulers as distinct from those of the State's and to fix the privy purses. The principle adopted for the settlement of private properties was that the list of private properties prepared by the ruler was discussed round the table between him, the Rajpramukh (in the case of States forming unions) or a representative of the provincial government (in the case of those States merged with the Provinces) and a representative of the States Ministry, and a settlement arrived at in a spirit of compromise with due regard to the safeguarding of public interests.[1] In the case of Bikaner a list of the private properties so agreed upon to be retained by the Maharaja was received from the States Ministry by their letter dated 17.2.1949 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.

Regarding the privy purse which is in the nature of consideration for surrender of ruling powers,[2] it was worked out on a uniform principle of 15 per cent on the first lakh of average annual revenue, 10 per cent on the next four lakhs and 7½ per cent above five lakhs subject to a maximum of ten lakhs per annum.[3] The only exceptions made were in the cases

1. White Paper on Indian States, pp.63-64
2. Ibid, pp. 123-24
3. The rulers whose Privy Purses at the time of merger were fixed at 10 lakhs and above are as under:-

   Hyderabad (50.00); Baroda (26.50); Mysore (26.00); Gwalior (25.00);Mewar (20.00); Travancore (18.00); Jaipur (18.00);Jodhpur(17.50); Bikaner (17.00) Patiala(17.00) Indore (15.00); Bhavnagar (10.00); Bhopal (11.00); Kohlapur (10.00)Nawanagar (10.00); Rewa (10.00).

   The Privy Purses fixed for the Rajasthan rulers were (figures in lacs) -

   Alwar (5.20); Bharatpur(5.02); Dholpur (2.64); Karauli(1.05); Banswara (1.26); Bundi (2.81); Dungarpur (1.98); Jhalawar (1.36); Kishangarh (1.36); Kota (7.00); Mewar (20.00); Partabgarh (1.02); Shahpura (0.90); Tonk(2.78); Jaipur(18.00) Jodhpur (17.50); Jaisalmer (1.80); Bikaner(17.00); Lawa(0.125

   The amount of 20 lakhs fixed for the Maharana of Mewar is composed of Rs.5,00,000 for charitable purposes and Rs.5,00,000 for Rajpramukhship and Rs.10,00,000 as Privy Purse.

of certain large and viable States where a higher sum was fixed in excess of 10 lacs and that too only for the life time of the ruler signing the merger agreement, whereafter the amount being reducible to ten lakhs for his successor.[1] As Bikaner was a large and viable unit, the Maharaja's Privy Purse was fixed at 17 lakhs and 10 lacs for his successors.[2]

And thus the curtain was rung down on the five century old history of Bikaner during which not only the most cordial relations existed between the House of Bikaner and the Central Powers but also the last two rulers played an important role for the attainment ~~of~~ by India of her full stature in the comity of Nations of the world and the unification of our country. This noble cause taken up by Maharaja Ganga Singh at a time when no other prince could have done it, and fighting for it whenever and wherever an opportunity offered itself, was nobly

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1. White Paper on Indian States, p. 121

2. Since Bikaner was the first State where a ruler (Maharaja Sadul Singh) passed away on 25.9.1950 after the integration it may be of interest to read the letter of the President of India recognizing the succession to the gaddi of the Bikaner State. The amount of Privy Purse of Rs.17 lakhs drawn by Maharaja Sadul Singh was according to the terms of settlement, reduced to Rs.10 lacs. This was also the first instance when any ruler receiving a Privy Purse of more than ten lacs had passed away after the integration and the privy purse cut from a higher amount to rupees ten lacs. The White Paper, however, shows that the privy purse of some rulers who were in receipt of privy purse in excess of ten lacs was to be fixed at a later date. Further, it is understood from usage and the large number of cases of rulers who have passed away since the integration and who were the recipients of a privy purse higher than ten lakhs, in all these cases the privy purse has been cut down to ten lacs. However, in the case of Nizam of Hyderabad, the privy purse of his grandson has been fixed at Rs.20 lakhs in 1964. Appendices XXXVIII and XXXIX.

continued by Maharaja Sadul Singh. He not only gave his unstinted support to every measure that went to speed up the achievement of the goal but also by his exhortations and actions induced the wavering princes, and compelled those scheming, to fall in line with the changing times, and extend their cooperation to Indian freedom fighters, thus helping in the maintenance of the solidarity of the country when it was faced with "partition on the one hand, the possibility of Balkanisation on the other." [1] No wonder then that his patriotic sentiments and actions received full praise not only from leaders like Dr. Rajendra Prasad, India's first President, and Sardar Patel but also from the first Governor-General of free India, Lord Mountbatten. These facts were also duly acclaimed in the press in general. It is a matter of much pride for the House of Bikaner that the patriotism of its rulers was perhaps unrivalled at a time when the drama of India's independence was being enacted on the Indian political arena.

With the extinction of the sovereignty of the Bikaner State, its armed forces were necessarily integrated in those of the Indian Union, Rajasthan States being grouped together temporarily. Bikaner has always been very proud of its State forces. Some of the finest fighting men both in the States forces as also in the Indian Army have hailed from the Bikaner State and from Rajputana. A large number of soldiers hailing from some of the toughest fighting stock, as for example the Rajputs, Jats and Kyamkhanis came from the Bikaner State.

Without a first-class fighting force it would not have been possible for the Bikaner State to exist. Ever since the treaty of 1818 the Bikaner State forces began gradually to be modernised as a result of the impact of the British. The many excursions carried out by the British forces in suppressing

1. Dr. Rajendra Prasad's speech dated 2.9.1954 while unveiling the Equestrian statue of Maharaja Sadul Singh at Bikaner.

lawlessness in Bikaner left their indelible imprint on the military administration of Bikaner. The British encroachment on the States implied a greater control over the armed forces of the States, as was expected. On a large number of occasions the Bikaner State forces fought side by side with the British such as the Mutiny, China War, Boer War, Somaliland campaign, World War I, and World War II. This further helped to improve the States forces and put them on a modern footing. In the time of Maharaja Ganga Singh, the Bikaner forces became one of the finest fighting body of all the States forces. Maharaja Ganga Singh himself a full Honorary General in the Indian Army often proudly led the parades of his State forces as the commander.

The Ganga Risala[1]- the Camel Corps- perhaps the only one of its kind, barring the Ganga Jaisalmer Risala, a much later offshoot of the Ganga Risala itself,[2] was earmarked for service ex-State. Nevertheless, there always remained a desire to keep the remaining troops in the State, always ready to form a reserve unit in case of need.

The Maharaja always stressed the great need to have a liaison between the State forces and the Indian Army and the Foreign & Political Department, and it was always his desire never to let the Army Department of the Government of India to directly control the Bikaner State forces. In regard to sentences and other penalties to be imposed and confirmed by the Viceroy and the King Emperor on the personnel of the Indian and the British army, the Maharaja maintained that as far as the States forces were concerned, the power of imposing similar sentences lay with the rulers of the States.

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1. The Ganga Risala was reorganised in 1889 under the orders of Maharaja Ganga Singh and was accepted as Imperial Service troops by the Government of India. It then had a strength of five hundred. It served on active service in Somaliland from 1902-1904, in the Great War from 1914-19, in the second World War from 1940-42. In 1951 it was converted into 13th Grenadiers by amalgamating the Jaisalmer Risala with it.
2. Both regiments merged int one forming Ganga Risala and now a most photogenic spectacle on all Republic Day parades.

Maharaja Ganga Singh always stressed the necessity of having most modern and efficient armament in the Bikaner State forces so that it could serve the empire efficiently. He advocated the supply of modern artillery guns which at that time were not allowed even to the Indian army manned by the Indians. The Bikaner State was the only State, except Kashmir where the artillery was allowed on account of the strategic position of the State, to have an artillery unit. The Patiala State followed thereafter in having an artillery. The Maharaja further stressed that the Bikaner State forces and for that matter Indian States forces may be governed by their own local army rules which for all purposes would include the clauses mutatis mutandis of the Indian Army Act and the Army Act. The British Government, of course, never allowed the repairing of the armament workshops in the States which would have helped the States forces to supplement the production of arms in times of need.

After the termination of World War I, it was considered by the officers of the Army Headquarters on the one hand and the princes on the other that the Indian States forces would have more successfully contributed and displayed their effectiveness on the field of war had they been efficiently organised. The princes, of course, were free only to maintain troops in so far as they did not seriously affect their financial position. They could be organised chiefly for service, internal security and reserve. The princes were not given the option to disband or increase their armed forces without informing the Army Headquarters. The reason for this was that it would disturb the strength of the Indian Army as a whole, for internal security purposes. The Military Adviser-in-Chief worked as a liaison officer between the Indian States Forces and Indian Army through the Foreign & Political Department in all matters, such as, training, supply of arms and ammunition.

In 1949 when the Bikaner State merged with Rajasthan, the

total strength of the Bikaner State forces stood at 3500. It was indeed a matter of much regret to all those concerned that soon after integration of the States of Rajputana, the integration of the various States Forces also took place. The fine fighting men of the States forces received a shabby deal. As a first step the Rajpramukh of the Rajasthan State was made the Commander-in-Chief of the States forces. The first senior most officer next to the Rajpramukh was General Jai Deo Singh General Officer Commanding of the Bikaner State forces. Furthermore when it was decided to amalgamate the Rajasthan forces with the India army in 1951, the strength of these forces was reduced and a good many of the personnel discharged on the pretext of medical fitness, Looking to this in retrospect, on the recent Chinese invasion of India, one may aver that that band of fine fighting soldiers could have stood India in good stead to defend the borders.

For some reason or other, the Indian army decided that the length of the service of the officers of the States forces should be reduced for purposes of fixing seniority or promotions in the Indian Army. While this may have been reasonable in the case of smaller States whose armed forces were not kept at par with that of Indian army, in the cases of other States like Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Hyderabad, Patiala, Jaisalmer, Kota and Udaipur who had first-rate troops, this was unfortunate. Many of the officers so absorbed in the Indian Army were consequently low graded and had to suffer financial loss. This was a matter of much heart burning both for the States which were integrated and for the personnel affected. As a result of this merger of the Rajasthan forces with the Indian Army, the Rajpramukh also ceased to be the Commander-in-Chief of the Rajasthan forces.

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1. Trachoma, a common eye disease in Rajasthan, was treated as one of the disqualifications for the armed personnel and they were discharged on that ground.

In order to appreciate this second phase of wiping off the entity of Indian States in the name of unification of India it is necessary to go back a little and examine the working of the minds of those at the helm of affairs in the States Department. When Sardar Patel was sceptical about the rulers of the Indian States agreeing to accede to the Indian Union and expressed his doubts about the same to V.P. Menon, he at once pointed out that the rulers could not refuse to accede. Menon's contention was that lapse of paramountcy was a blessing in disguise for India because with it ended the many privileges which the princes enjoyed under the various treaties and engagements and which carried with them certain obligations which they would have been obliged to honour if paramountcy had been transferred to them. According to him they were now free. He even told the Sardar that in case of political or communal agitation in the States or in case of the people rising up and demanding freedom or to join India or in case of popular agitation beginning to threaten the rule and even the lives of the rulers, who else would they have to look up to for protection other than the Indian Government. He said that it was now their turn to say how the princes behaved.[1] And the Sardar was not slow to catch the point, which in plainer words meant that any of these conditions could be created to achieve the desired end. And instances are not wanting; when the Dewan of Travancore came to inform the Viceroy that the Maharaja of Travancore wished to proclaim his State's independence, the Viceroy asked him to see V.P.Menon who immediately reminded the Dewan of his State being a breeding place of communism and under the circumstances, if anything happened, the Government of India would not be able to come forward with help. The events proved it to be correct. The Working Committee of the State Congress Committee immediately organised demonstrations against the Maharaja of Travancore, the Dewan was stabbed and seriously wounded and the Maharaja

1. Leonard Mosley; Op.cit., pp. 169-70

of Travancore soon signed the Instrument of Accession.[1] Jodhpur is another glaring example. On learning that the Maharaja of Jodhpur had met Mr. Jinnah and was toying with the possibilities of opting for Pakistan, V.P.Menon at once went to see the Maharaja at his hotel in Delhi and took him to the Viceroy's House where he was "carolled" by the Viceroy and he ultimately agreed to sign the Instrument of Accession.[2] The Nawab of Bhopal and the Maharaja of Mysore had been marking time till the last but ultimately gave in.

Thus, when soon after the States had acceded to the Indian Union, in respect of the three subjects of common concern, namely, Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Communications, the curtain was lifted for the second act of complete merger of over five hundred States. A lurking doubt was created in the minds of the people if the builders of free India were completely honest with the rulers and whether they did not actually negotiate accession as a first step with mental reservation. The argument that the smaller States could not have a high administrative efficiency as required by the people after Independence, and hence that there should be a move to merge the smaller States into groups, or with the adjoining provinces, or into centrally administered areas, was understandable. In fact Maharaja Sadul Singh had advocated the formation of sizeable units of States much earlier so that they could keep themselves abreast with administrative reforms. It was indeed a great pity that his advice had not been heeded in time. The question of the merger of larger viable units, however, was a different matter.

The two issues of accession and merger should never be confused. Accession of the States meant bringing into India under one flag nearly 1/3rd more of India at a time when a

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1. Leonard Mosley; Op.cit. pp. 174 and 176.
2. Ibid, pp.176-80

third force was possible and the Centre was somewhat weak due to transfer of power from British to Indian hands and due to the upheaval caused by partition. Maharaja Sadul Singh's strong lead to bring about accession was thus a most patriotic move. The merger issue, however, was an entirely different proposition as this envisaged boundary changes within the country with the head of State from a ruler changing over to a life Rajpramukh. In fact the question of monarchical governments continuing as constitutional heads had been accepted in principle subject to the people's approval by all the Freedom fighter leaders including Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel.

Incidentally it may be mentioned here that in anticipation of the events to follow as a necessary consequence of partition, the Nawab of Loharu had entered in June 1947 into administrative arrangements with the Bikaner State with the concurrence of the Crown Representative. These arrangements continued till some time after partition, and during the chaos that prevailed in the country immediately on partition as a resultant mass exodus of minorities from one dominion to the other, the State of Loharu and its people were afforded full protection by Bikaner. In December, 1947 when the question of merger of smaller States arose, the Nawab of Loharu expressed a desire for the merger of Loharu with the Bikaner State. On the matter being referred to the States Ministry it was stated that it had no objection and that negotiations could be continued. But in January, 1948 when Mr. Panikkar, Prime Minister of the Bikaner State, went to Delhi, the agreement of the State Ministry to the proposals taken by him was not readily available and he advised the Maharaja to take up the matter personally with them when he next visited Delhi. The Maharaja visited Delhi on the 7th February, 1948 and spoke about the matter to Sardar Patel who said that he had no objection to the merger of Loharu with Bikaner, but added that a section of the people of Loharu did not want it, and therefore, could not be agreed to. The Maharaja thereupon

pointed out that it was only a small section of the people which was opposed to the proposed merger but agreed to wait and see which way the public opinion drifted. The next morning, on the 8th February, 1948, the Maharaja apprised V.P.Menon of the talks that he had with the Sardar and Mr. Menon assured him that no action would be taken regarding the merger of Loharu without consulting him.

The Maharaja left for Bikaner the same day by plane just before lunch and by 3.00 p.m. i.e. within a few hours the Nawab of Loharu who was in Delhi, was presented for signatures a draft letter by C.C. Desai, a senior Secretary in the States Ministry, to the effect that the Nawab agreed to hand over the administration of his State to the Central Government. The Nawab returned to Bikaner on the 11th February, 1948 and explained the whole position to the Maharaja who immediately wrote a letter to Sardar Patel clearly bringing out all the facts and expressing surprise at the manner in which he, who had always been foremost in giving the fullest cooperation to the Government of India and States Ministry, should have been treated in the matter.[1] This, however, was to no avail and Sardar Patel wrote to the Maharaja in reply refuting any implication of pressure by the officers of the States Ministry.[2] In the same letter the Maharaja was also informed of the Nawab of Loharu's having signed the merger agreement. This is yet another example of the way in which the process of merger was being carried out.

But the sudden switch in the policy of the new Government of India in respect of the larger States which had even in the draft Constitution[3] been declared as viable units and which

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 1252/IX of 1947; Maharaja Sadul Singh's letter dated 12.2.1948 to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
2. Ibid, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's letter of the 20th February 1948 to the Maharaja.
3. Kanwar Jaswant Singh of Daudsar's affidavit.

could maintain their separate identity, is rather hard to explain. Moreso, because the declared attitude of the Indian leaders and those at the helm of affairs had been clear on the point, Mahatma Gandhi had once told Sir Mirza Ismail that all he asked of the princes was that they should become constitutional heads of their States and let their people govern themselves under their aegis.[1] Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had in December 1946 stated in the Constituent Assembly in unequivocal terms that the form of government in the States was solely the concern of the people and if they desired to have the monarchical form it was open to them to have it and that he would not like to interfere.[2] Again in April, 1947 Pandit Nehru said in the same body that while a decision for a Republic for the whole of India was being taken it did not bar any State from continuing the monarchical form of government provided that it fitted in the larger picture of freedom.[3] Sardar Patel had in his statement of the 5th July, 1947 given assurance to the rulers that except on the subjects on which the accession of the States was being asked for, in other matters the autonomous existence of the States would be scrupulously respected. Sardar Patel had also made it expressly clear to Maharaja Sadul Singh in his letters[4] that the States Ministry accepted any proposals for merger only when it was satisfied that it had the support both of the ruler and the people. Even V.P.Menon stated in his press conference at Delhi on the 29th March, 1948 that the bigger States like Cochin, Travancore, Mysore, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Bikaner and Bhopal, would stand as

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1. Sir Mirza Ismail; My Public Life, p. 133
2. Constituent Assembly Debates, pp.56-61; Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's resolution regarding aims and objectives moved on the 13th December, 1946.
3. Ibid, p. 351; Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru while moving the resolution on the report of the States Committee on the 28th April, 1947.
4. Sardar Patel's letters dated 5.1.1948 and 20.2.1948 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.

independent units and that the number of such unions and units would be twenty-five. Mr. Gadgil while speaking in the Parliament on behalf of the States Minister on the 15th March, 1948, re-affirmed the Government's declared policy that the States which had individual representation on the Constituent Assembly would be treated as separate viable units and that there would be no objection to their remaining separate autonomous units if they so desired.

Bikaner was a viable unit in every sense of the term. It satisfied all the conditions regarding population, revenue and individual representation in the Constituent Assembly. Its administration was progressive and democratic and the ruler had always been infused with the highest sense of patriotism and had always supported the cause of India's Independence. It could not be argued in the case of Bikaner that the step was taken in response to any popular demand for better government as the State already had a legislature since 1913, the first of its kind in the Rajputana States and one of the first few amongst all the Indian States. It had a separate judiciary, a mile-stone of good government. Besides, it was served with a net-work of hospitals and dispensaries throughout the State.Bikaner could boast of having the finest and the best equipped hospitals in northern India. Education of the people was well cated for and Bikaner boasted of many colleges with an elaborate base of schools of all grades. All important towns in the State had municipalities, district boards and the Panchayat system, and cooperative societies were duly functioning Bikaner was particularly proud of its first-class network of railways and communications and its efficient electrification of towns and villages. The irrigation of the northern portions of the Bikaner State had further added to the improvement of the lot of the people and with the Bhakra Canal on the anvil, the prospects of Bikaner's yearly income reaching five crore mark was possible in the foreseeable future. The State was solvent and had enough money to spend on public amenities. A sum of Rs.4.86 crores handed over to the Rajasthan exchequer,

the highest amongst the Rajputana States, amply justifies this.[1] The privy purse of the ruler had been separated since 1902 and fixed at a reasonable percentage. Thus the State was practically functioning on a modern democratic system in which civil liberties were guaranteed and providing the maximum of amenities to the people was the cherished objective of the Government.

Suddenly negotiations were started in November 1948 by the States Ministry and its representative V.P.Menon, firstly regarding the terms and conditions that would be acceptable to the ruler in case he decided upon integration with greater Rajasthan. Then in December, 1948 V.P.Menon visited Bikaner when he met certain leading citizens and ascertained their wishes regarding the integration of Bikaner. From a report regarding the proceedings of this meeting,[2] it transpires that in the meeting, at which Mr. C.S.Venkatachar the then Prime Minister of Bikaner was also present, Mr.Menon explained to the audience the benefits likely to accrue by the integration of the State, such as the reduction in administrative expenditure. He also stressed that no other persons than the leaders of the country like Pandit Jawharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel were better placed to decide as to what was

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1. It may be remembered that Bikaner lies in the Thar Desert. When Maharaja Ganga Singh succeeded to the gaddi in 1887, the State's income was 18 lacs. In the reign of Maharaja Ganga Singh and Maharaja Sadul Singh this income touched the highest peak of 3.50 crores. This was only possible through hard work and good planning. Nature and the terrain were all against prosperity and yet determined men were able to achieve this.

2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 412/XXV, part II- Integration of Rajputana States. The author also heard the discussions himself.

good for the people and added that when these leaders said that integration of the State was in their interests, it was so, and that the people should have faith in their words. It is recorded that when Pandit Laxmi Narain, a leading advocate and an honoured citizen, who was amongst the audience raised the question of the plebicite being taken to ascertain the wishes of the people, V.P. Menon resented the remarks and said that in no other State such demand had been made and asked the audience to have faith in the leaders and do as they desired. This feeling against merger is more than possible as Bikaner was a well-run State. This was patently contradictory to what Sardar Patel had clearly stated only ten months earlier that no mergers would be brought about without consulting the people of that State. Pandit Suraj Karan Acharya, a top-ranking advocate, another member of the audience, asked if the matter had already been decided or was open for their consultation, to which, the report adds, Mr. Menon replied that the matter had already been decided and that the Government of India would accomplish the integration scheme. V.P.Menon further added that the Government of India in the initial stages wanted only succession for the sake of facility as they did not want the 560 States to remain independent.[1]

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1. It is possible that the viable States could have continued with governors, their administrative territorial boundaries being preserved without dislocation of life.

   Alternatively, the rulers of the viable units could have continued in the shape of appointed governors for the first few years. We only have to look at Mysore to see how the Maharaja was made the governor of Mysore and he continued for fifteen years as such. Sadar-i-Riyasat of Jammu and Kashmir is also another example of the same thing.

Referring to the Instrument of Accession, V.P.Menon said that no democratic government could bind down the future of a country by such assurances. On a question being raised as to why at all the signatures of the Maharaja were necessary when the matter had been so arbitrarily decided upon, Mr. Menon is reported to have remarked that the signatures were necessary as a matter of legal formality.

From these facts one is led to deduce that the apparently sudden shift in policy from forging a constitutional link with the States and removing the vacuum created by the lapse of paramountcy to their complete integration, appears in retrospect to have been a pre-determined policy and there was nothing to prevent the new Dominion from making promises with mental reservations.[1] It is, however, possible that the sudden change in the Government of India's stand from the continuance of certain States as viable units to complete merger, might have been precipitated by the unfortunate happenings in Hyderabad, Junagadh and Jodhpur.[2]

Maharaja Sadul Singh's surprise at the switch in the Government's policy of the viable units to merger is observed quite clearly in his confidential note[3] in which Maharaja Sadul Singh clearly writes "Bikaner has been included in the category of viable units and considered as such till now. How this change has suddenly taken place?

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1. Leonard Mosley, Op.cit. p. 173.

   "As there was nothing to prevent the new dominion, after the transfer of power, extending its functions through the State Department, these limitations and safeguards could obviously be made valueless in due course, and in fact quickly became so."

2. V. P. Menon, The story of the Integration of the Indian Union, pp. 112-113.

2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 412/GN-XXV.

Why then this coer$ion?" Subsequent points on the list indicate that the demand for merger was pressed by the Rajputana Regional Council of the All India States Peoples Conference which incidentally had only one representative namely, Raghuvar Dayal Goel[1] from Bikaner and he too was a non-Bikaneri. This regional Council was dominated by Gokulbhai Bhatt of Sirohi and Hira Lal Shastri of Jaipur, all of whom were defeated in the first general elections. The unpopularity of Mr. Goel as the representative of the people of Bikaner is proved by his polling only about 6000 votes against the author in the 1952 first general elections for the Bikaner-Churu Parliamentary seat$, the author polling 1,17,926 votes.[2]

Further discussions took place with Sardar Patelm, Mr. Menon on the 5th December, 10th December and 11th December, 1948 and in February 1949, only two months later, integration was finally decided upon and on the 7th April, 1949, the integration of the Bikaner State into the Greater Rajasthan union took place. The total time taken from the announcement by Sardar Patel as Minister of States that the viable units would continue and the integration of the States in 1949 was about 18 months.

While looking back at the question of merger of the States ánr criticism is not to the merger of the States themselves, but to the way in which it was brought about after assurances to the contrary given ab lib by the top-most leaders of India. While the author himself has been

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1. Mr. Goel was also a Minister in the Rajasthan Council before the first general elections in which he was defeated.
2. The author has been an M.P. from Bikaner-Churu from 1952 to 1957, then was re-elected in 1957 from Bikaner-Churu and Ganganagar, a double member constituency, when he won the election against his Congress opposition by almost 99000 vote margin. In 1962 the author was re-elected and this time the Congress did not set up a candidate. The author contested as an Independent ~~at~~ all the three elections which he won.

an ardent supporter of the merger system and the ushering in of democratic institutions in the Indian States, nevertheless, the forcing of merger on the people of the States without taking their opinion was hardly democratic. It would have been much better had the Government of India at the time of the accession of the States to the Indian union declared their policy that the ultimate merger of the States would be their goal, immediately or in progressive stages, While admitting that this might have presented some difficulties, nevertheless, a man of Sardar Patel's statesmanship could have surmounted these difficulties and brought about the ultimate unification of India.

For the glory of our national Government after the rapid change that came about in the life of our country and the bloodless revolution that took place in India culminating in our Independence - one of the greatest changes in the world- it was essential to keep the pledged word to restore confidence in the minds of the patriotic people. Quick changes, broken pledges and irratic constitutional changes are steps which often lead to lack of faith in the Government by the people who have longed to serve their country well.

Knowing Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, as we do, to be a thoroughly outspoken and honest man, we were impressed when he spoke out his mind on the 13th December 1946 in the Constituent Assembly on future of the States. It would, therefore, be interesting to try and find out at what stage the Government of India began to think differently and change over from the policy of acceptance of viable units to total integration. Pandit Nehru said in the Constituent Assembly:-

> "Our intention regarding the States must be clearly understood.....It (the resolution) imposes nothing on the States against their will.....It is quite possible that the people may like to have their Rajas. The decision will rest with them.....If a part within it (the republic)desires

to have its own type of administration, it will be at liberty to have it.....There is no incongruity or impossibility about a certain definite form of administration in the States, provided there is complete freedom and responsible government there and the people really are incharge. If monarchical figure heads are approved by the people of the State, of a particular State whether I like it or not, I certainly will not like to interfere." 1

After four and a half months, while moving the resolution on the Report of the States Committee, on 28th April 1947 he again said:-

".....While we were deciding ~~to~~ in favour of a republic for the whole of India, that did not bar any State from continuing the monarchical form of government so far as that was concerned provided, of course, that they fitted in the larger picture of freedom and provided I hope, that there was the same measure of freedom and responsible government in the State." 2

Only nine weeks later on the 5th July 1947 Sardar Patel in a statement in the White Paper spoke as follows:-

"The States have already accepted the basic principle that for defence, foreign affairs and communication they would come into the Indian Union. We ask no more of them than accession on these three subjects in which the common interests of the country are involved. In other matters we would scrupulously respect their autonomous existence."[3]

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1. Private Secretary to the Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No:412/GNXXV, Integration of Rajputana States.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

Six months later in a letter addressed to Maharaja Sadul Singh on the 5th January 1948, Sardar Patel further clarified the position:-

> ".....I wish to make this quite clear to Your Highness that we do not ourselves initiate or encourage any merger proposal; nor do we accept any such proposal unless we are satisfied that it has the support and backing of both the ruler and the people concerned."1

On 7th January 1948 Mr. V.P. Menon said that a criterion, taking into account the income, the population and the possibility of development in each State, had been laid down and would be applied. There was no question of suggesting that the merger should include those States which had individual representation in the Constituent Assembly.[2]

A little over six weeks later Sardar Patel in his letter of 20th February, 1948 to the Maharaja of Bikaner wrote:-

> "I have made it clear more than once that the States Ministry would support a scheme of merger only when the ruler and the people are agreed on this subject. We have constantly maintained that position." 3

N.V. Gadgil about three weeks later on the 15th March 1948 speaking in Parliament deputizing for the States Minister said:-

> "The States which have individual representation on the Constituent Assembly have been assured by the Government of India from time to time that they will be treated as separate viable units....There is no desire on our part in any way to compel or coerce them into merger or integration."4

Two weeks later, on the 29th March 1948 in a statement at a Press Conference Mr. V.P. Menon said:-

> "The bigger States like Cochin, Travancore, Mysore, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Bikaner, Bhopal etc., would stand as independent units and the number of unions and units will be 25....It was not the Government's intention to touch any of the major States like Cochin, Travancore, Mysore, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Bhopal, Patiala etc.,..... The Government stood

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 412/GNXXV.
2. Proceedings of the Meeting of H.E. the Governor General with ruling Princes and representatives on 7.1.48.
3. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.: 1252/IX of 1947.
4. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No: 412/GN XXV

> by the States Ministry's undertaking that viable units would be allowed to stand by themselves unless they voluntarily came in...."[1]

On the 14th November, 1948, only eight and a half months after Mr. Menon's previous stand of the 15th March 1948 he contradicted himself when he raised a question in a discussion at Delhi about the merger of the States of Bikaner, Jodhpur, Jaipur etc.,[2]

Further, from a secret list of points dated 9.11.48 drawn up by Maharaja Sadul Singh for talks with the States Ministry it appears that the merger of the State had been suggested about this time. Point 2 of the list says:

> "2. Bikaner has been included in the category of viable units and considered as such till now. How this change has suddenly taken place? Why then this coercion?"

The records indicate that the question of merger of the Bikaner, Jaipur and Jodhpur States having been brought up by the States Ministry during meetings with their rulers, the Maharaja of Bikaner handed to V.P. Menon on 6th December 1948 a list of provisional terms that were demanded by the rulers in case they agreed to integrate and these terms were duly agreed upon by V.P. Menon. The remarks of V.P. Menon at the meeting held by him in Bikaner with some leading citizens of the place on the 7th December 1948 at the Durbar Hall, Lallgarh Palace, clearly indicate that an unilatral decision had already been taken by the Government of India for the merger of the viable States also and that what was left to be done was only to secure formal and legal acceptance by the rulers. After a few more meetings in December, 1948, and the months following, the merger of Bikaner, Jodhpur, Jaipur and Jaisalmer had been

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 412/GN XXV.
2. Notes of the meeting of Maharaja Sadul Singh with Mr. V.P. Menon on 14.11.1948 at Delhi.

finally decided upon and on the 7th April, 1949 it was accomplished. What may appear to a historian most amusing are some methods used by the Government of India to get the rulers to accept merger by touching their vanity. In India, for example, the rulers had gun salutes[1] ranging from twenty-one guns to nine guns at the lower rung of the ladder, not counting the non-salute States. The British are often believed to have used the increase in dynastic gun salutes and granting personal gun salutes as a form of temptation. In many cases the offer of life Rajpramukhships was sufficient enticement for a ruler to accept the merger. These life Rajpramukhships later remained in existence for a couple of years only. Obviously, the rulers had seen the writing

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1. 19 Guns:

1. Maharana of Udaipur.

17 Guns:

1. Maharaja of Bikaner.
2. Maharaja of Bharatpur.
3. Maharaja of Bundi.
4. Maharaja of Jaipur.
5. Maharaja of Jodhpur.
6. Maharaja of Karauli.
7. Maharao of Kota.
8. Nawab of Tonk.

15 Guns:

1. Maharaja of Alwar.
2. Maharawal of Banswara.
3. Maharaj-Rana of Dholpur.
4. Maharawal of Dungarpur.
5. Maharaja of Idar.
6. Maharawal of Jaisalmer.
7. Maharaja of Kishangarh.
8. Maharawal of Partapgarh.
9. Maharao of Sirohi.

13 Guns

1. Maharaj-Rana of Jhalawar.

on the wall. The question was, however, of who accepted merger first and thereby gain certain personal advantages. These gains came in the shape of life Rajpramukhships, perhaps slightly higher privy purses, concessions of various types, like free electricity and water, a few additional palaces in the inventary of personal properties, etc. Special privy purses were given to some rulers who were in bad health and these additional amounts were also subject to negotiations. Unlike Bikaner and a few other more enlightened States, there were many States which right upto the time of integration had no fixed privy purses separate from the State exchequer. Adjustment of what comprised State funds and what fell into the category of personal property of the ruler was a matter of pure negotiations. Then again fixing of allowances for Dowager Maharanis, who, according to the agreements, were to get a separate allowance from the State, was also subject to negotiations. Allotment of funds from State funds to the ruler's children, particularly where no fixed privy purses existed, were all negotiable matters. Dowager Maharanis were given a separate allowance from the State. All those Maharanis who became dowager after the integration, however, received their allowances, from the privy purses of the rulers. In any case personal vanity and jealousies amongst certain rulers, inter se, who perhaps for generations had been figbting for seniority and some of them, who after becoming Rajpramukhs, considered themselves super-rulers of all the States of the union under their Rajpramukhship, thus possibly satisfying a long-felt ego. This desire was obviously satisfied because of the technical position of life-Rajpramukhs having been accepted. Fortunately, this highly undemocratic objectionable, and undesirable institution came to an end very soon.

We only have to examine carefully the various assurances given by the Government of India and its new leaders to come to an impartial conclusion. It shows that having accomplished the accesion of the Indian States, the Government of India was naturally in a far more powerful position to dictate their terms with regard to integration of the States. As students of history we have to take an impartial view of the situation. While there could be no argument with the philosophy of democratisation of the States to bring them on par with the rest of British India, nevertheless, the existence of a State or States which had carried on for centuries is asmuch justified as the continuance of any of the new States in India since Independence. Changes come about in the history of a nationa and what at a particular time may be considered normal, may later on be considered as an anachronism or the reverse may be the case. The same way, had the larger States been allowed to continue and had later on become part 'A' States on par with other States of the country such as Mysore, there is no gainsaying the fact that public opinion would have readily accepted them. The fact that public opinion in most of the well administered viable States was not in favour of merger, was borne out by the general election where we find that nearly every ruler who contested in the 1952 general elections even against the mighty Congress, nearly always won the elections. In a democracy there could be no greater barometer of the public mind than the general elections. When Maharaja Sadul Singh returned from England a few months after Integration of the States, he received the most tumultous public welcome when he went to visit Sri Laxminathji's temple - a reception the like of which is not often come across. The author was in the car with his father, Maharaja Sadul Singh and a normal

half hour run took five hours because the enthusiasm and love of the people was so great.

Sardar Patel had often said that Government would not accept proposals for merger unless they were satisfied that it had the support and backing of both the ruler and the people concerned. It would be interesting to see that while the rulers were either coerced or enticed into accepting integration, so far as the people were concerned, they were never consulted and neither was there any suitable machinery by which the Government of India could consult them. The argument that the Praja Parishad was the voice of the people had been completely demolished by the fact of the first general elections when the top leaders of this organisation toppled down in Rajasthan.

While the viable units had sufficient incomes to develop their States to bring them on a level with other more advanced States of Indian Union, it may also be remembered that after integration crores of rupees are being advanced by the Centre as Central aid from the Five Year Plan funds and from other sources to develop these latter States. The plea that one united State would have surplus money which was being wasted on the various administrative heads of the States has also proved wrong. The Rajasthan Government, ever since it was formed, has been short of funds year after year. It may be noted that none of the Indian States had been the recipients of aid from the Government of India in the shape of Central aid or Five Year Plan allocation whether big or small.[1]

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1. It may be remembered that the Gang Canal project was totally financed by the Bikaner State when its income was very little. No Central aid was possible. The Rajasthan Canal today is being financed to a very large extent by the Centre. That since the State Railways were not under the Centre before, nearly 1000 miles of Bikaner State Railway were likewise financed from the State exchequer without any Central aid. The same was true for the State Armed forces also. These burdens have since been greatly lightened for the successor Union by the Centre taking over Railways, Defence and some of the major irrigation and other projects.

If the viable units had continued and the volume of Central aid to them had been the same as given to other States[1], there was no reason why both the types of States could not have progressed equally.

On the other hand, the sincerity of the princes and their sacrifices in the larger interests of the country and specially those of Maharaja Sadul Singh cannot better be described than in the words of the late Dr. Rajendra Prasad who said:

> "By placing the interests of the country before their own the princes played a memorable part in the process of India's unification. The help which the late Maharaja Sadul Singhji gave in this connection, has been thankfully acknowledged by the great Indian leader and Minister of States at that time, namely, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel."2

The statue was raised by the voluntary contribution of his erstwhile subjects in memory of the late Maharaja who died a premature death striving for the welfare of his people and parted with his ancient heritage for the greater glory of his mother country and so the five century old saga of Bikaner's history comes to an end. The desert soil of Bikaner produced fighters strong and true. The part that Bikaner played in the unification of India is, therefore, a matter of much pardonable pride for all of us.

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1. Former provinces.
2. Dr. Rajendra Prasad's speech dated 2.9.1954 at the unveiling of the statue of Maharaja Sadul Singhji at Bikaner.

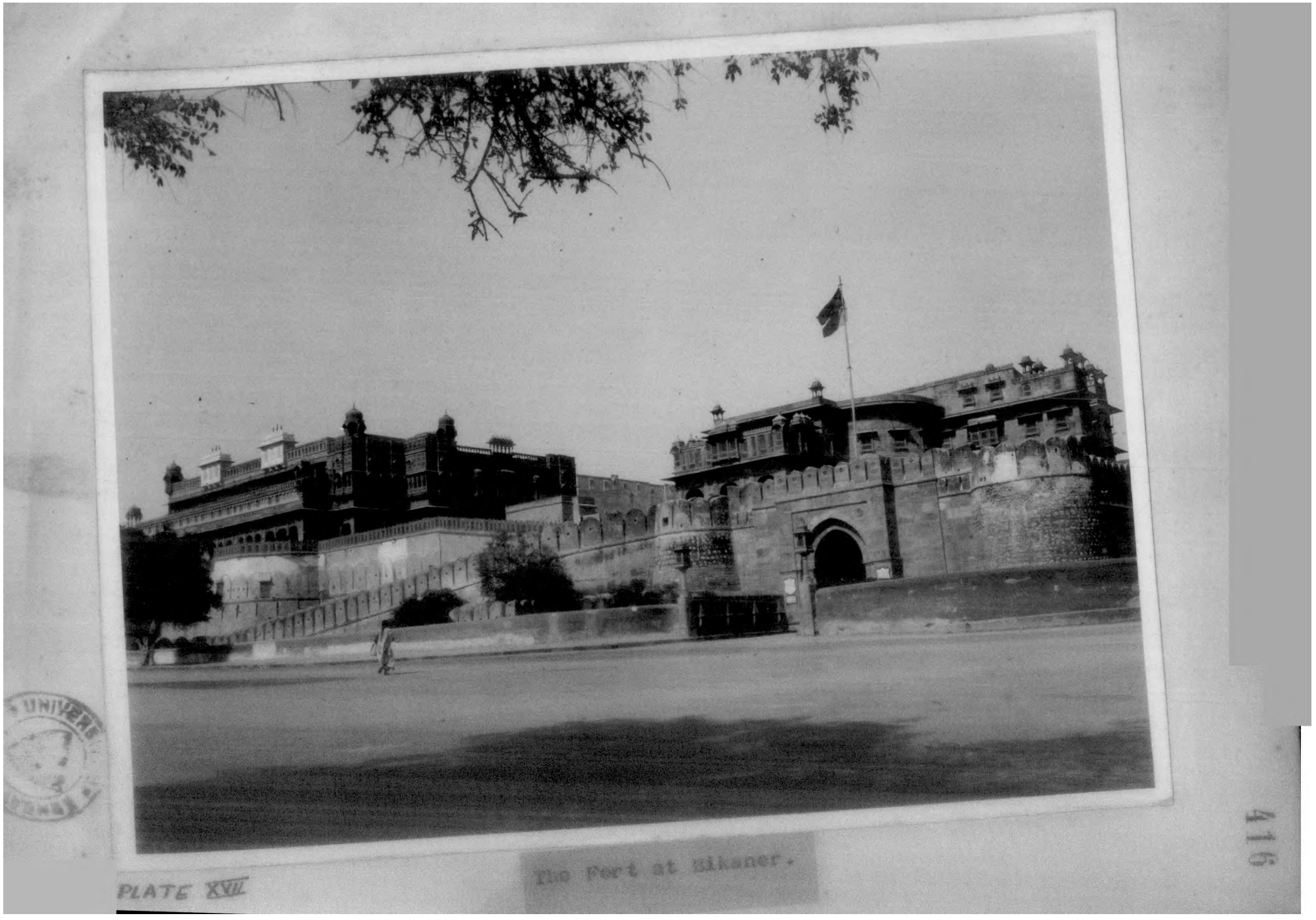


PLATE XVII

The Fort at Bikaner.

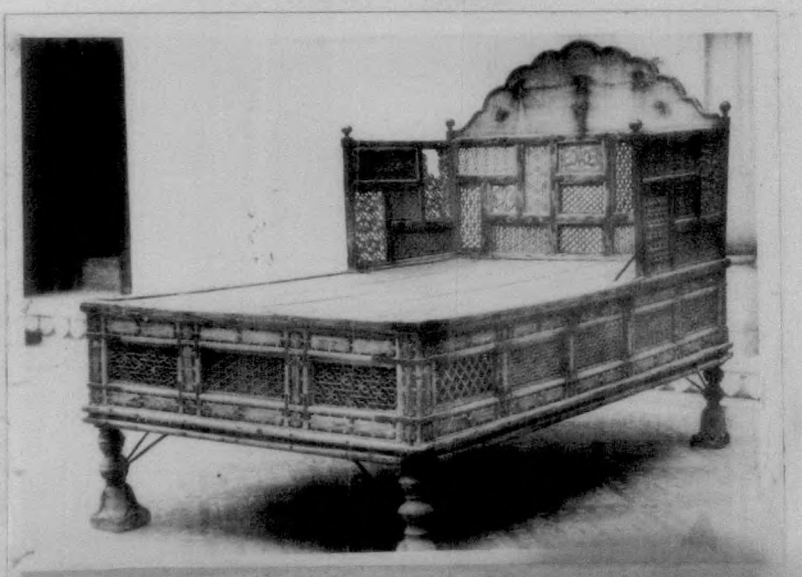
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PLATE XVIII



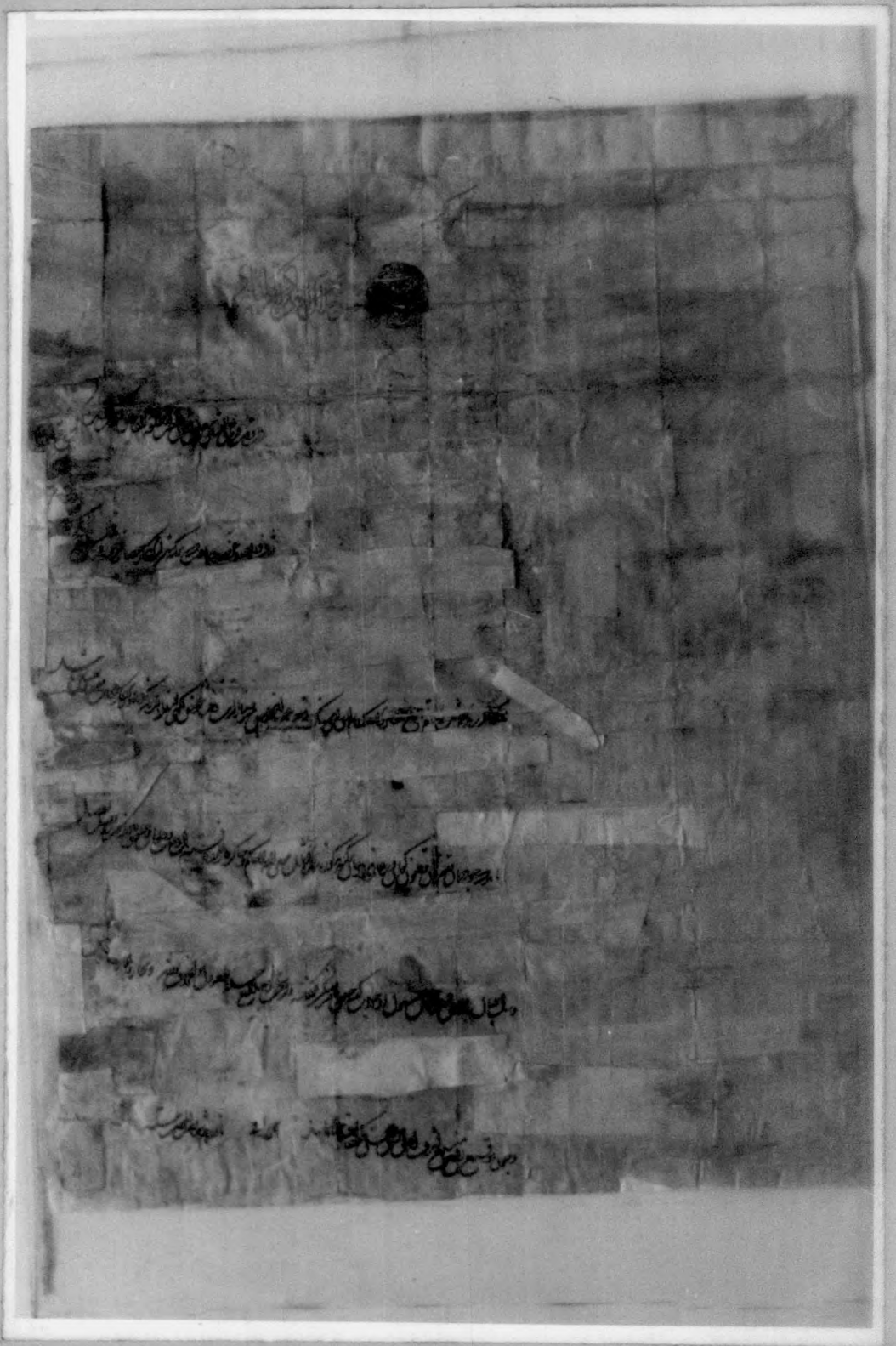
Jain Saraswati, from Pallu
(12th century A.D.)

PLATE XIX



The ancestral Kanauj Throne brought by Rao Bikaji from Jodhpur, 1490.

PLATE XX

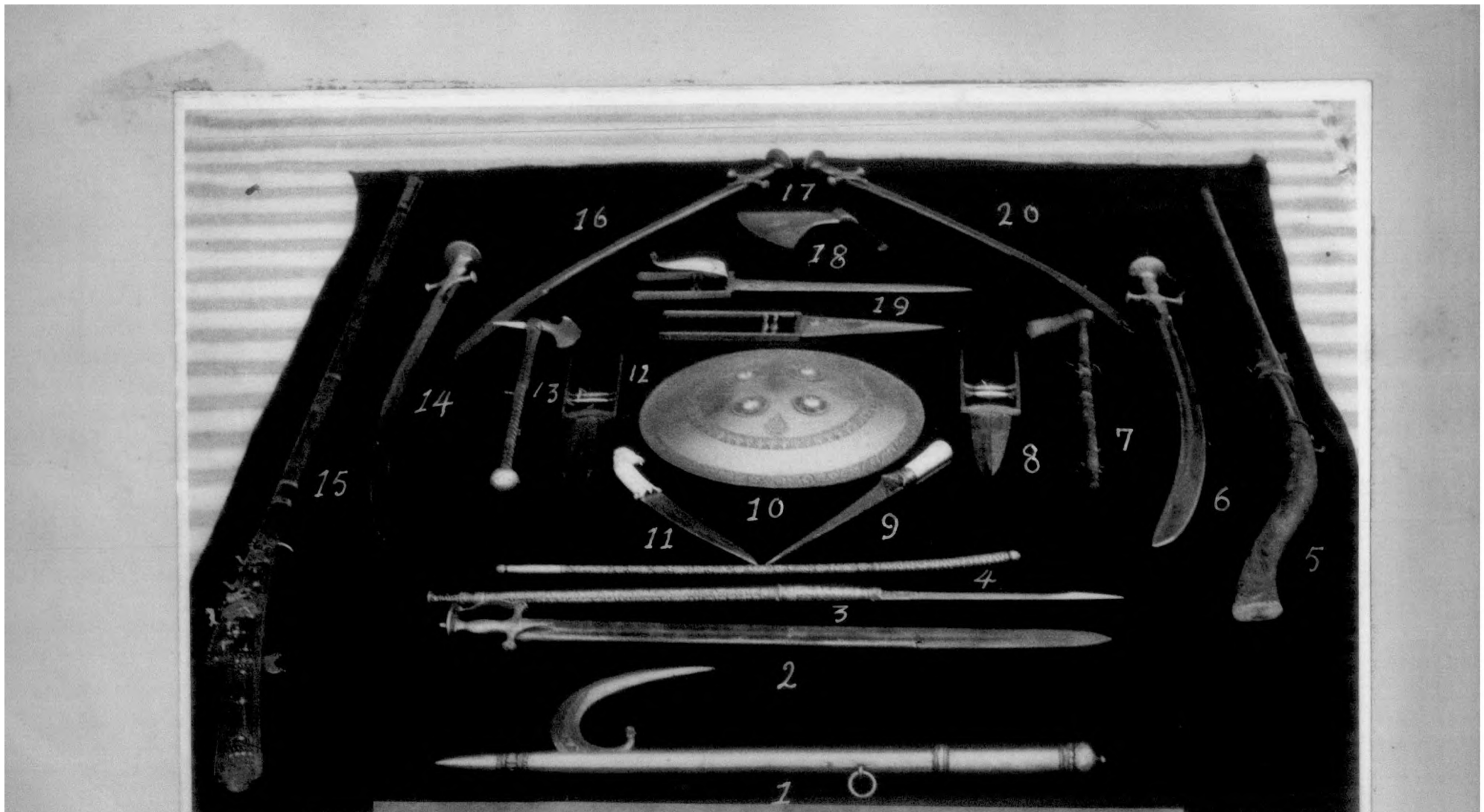


Akbar's Farman dated 15th Rajab, 993 A.H.(A.D.1585),
(The oldest Mughal Farman in the world)

PLATE XXL

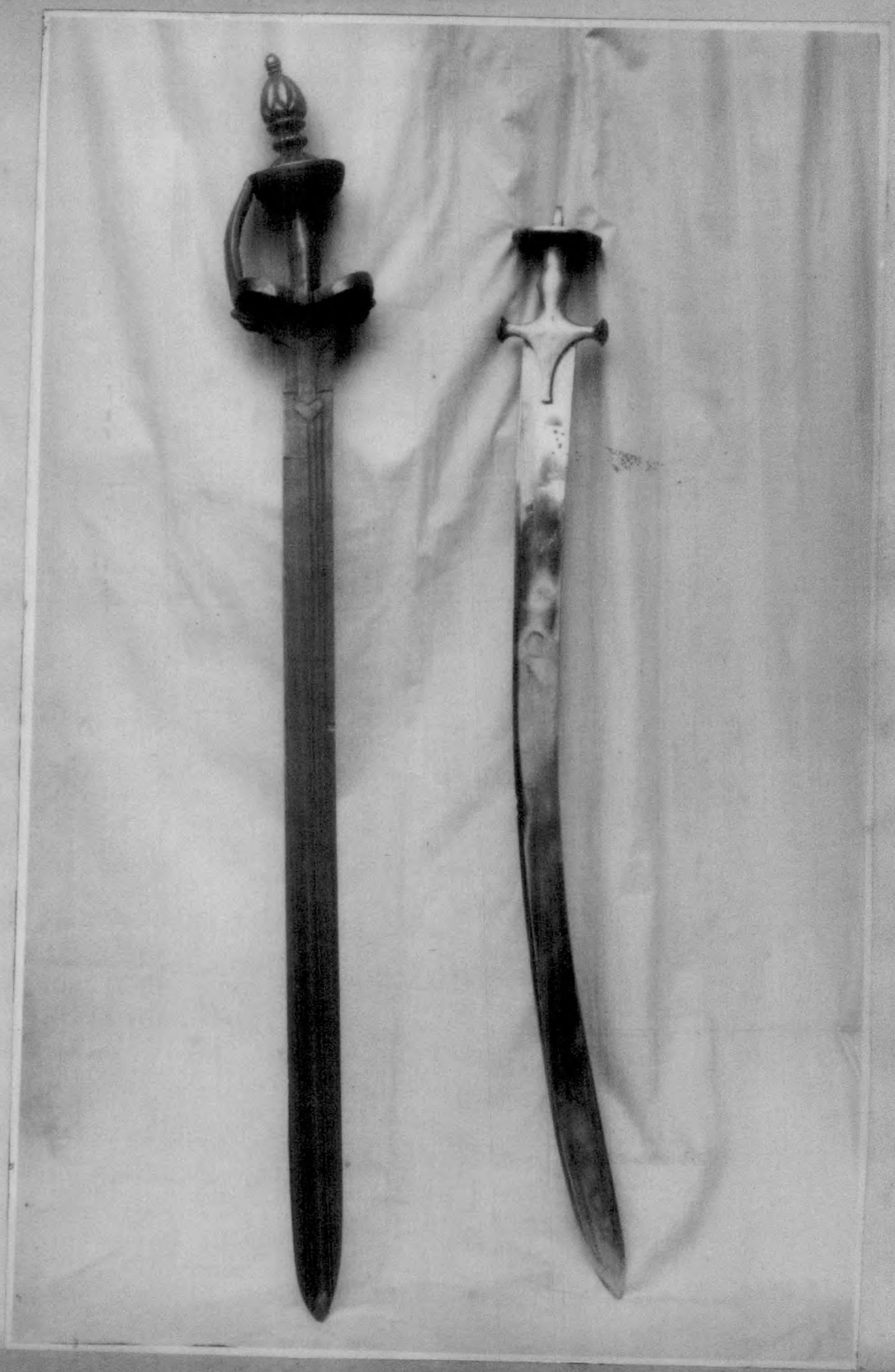


The Mahi Maratib



1. Ankush; 2. Karanshahi Khanda; 3.Ballam (spear); 4. Gaidia; 5. Bandook -Lamchbar with four revolving magazines; 6. Karanshahi sword; 7. Axe; 8. Katar; 9. Pesh Kabz; 10. Shield; 11. Katar, ivory handle 12.Katar-gold leaf work; 13.Pharsa; 14.Hakimshahi Sword; 15.Bandook-Lamchbar with three hammers; 16. Sword -Kheri, steel; 17.Parsa; 18.Long dagger; 19. Katar Deccan style;20.Sword.

PLATE XXII



Maharaj Padam Singh's sword and Khanda.(Left), Khanda,weighing 25 lbs.,4½ ft.long with 2½ inches blade. (Right) Sword, 3ft.11" long with 2½" blade, weighing 8 lbs. The chip of the sword which chipped off when Padam Singh killed the Emperor's Kotwal in Court is clearly visible.

PLATE XXIV.



Lord Indra on elephant.

PLATE XXV

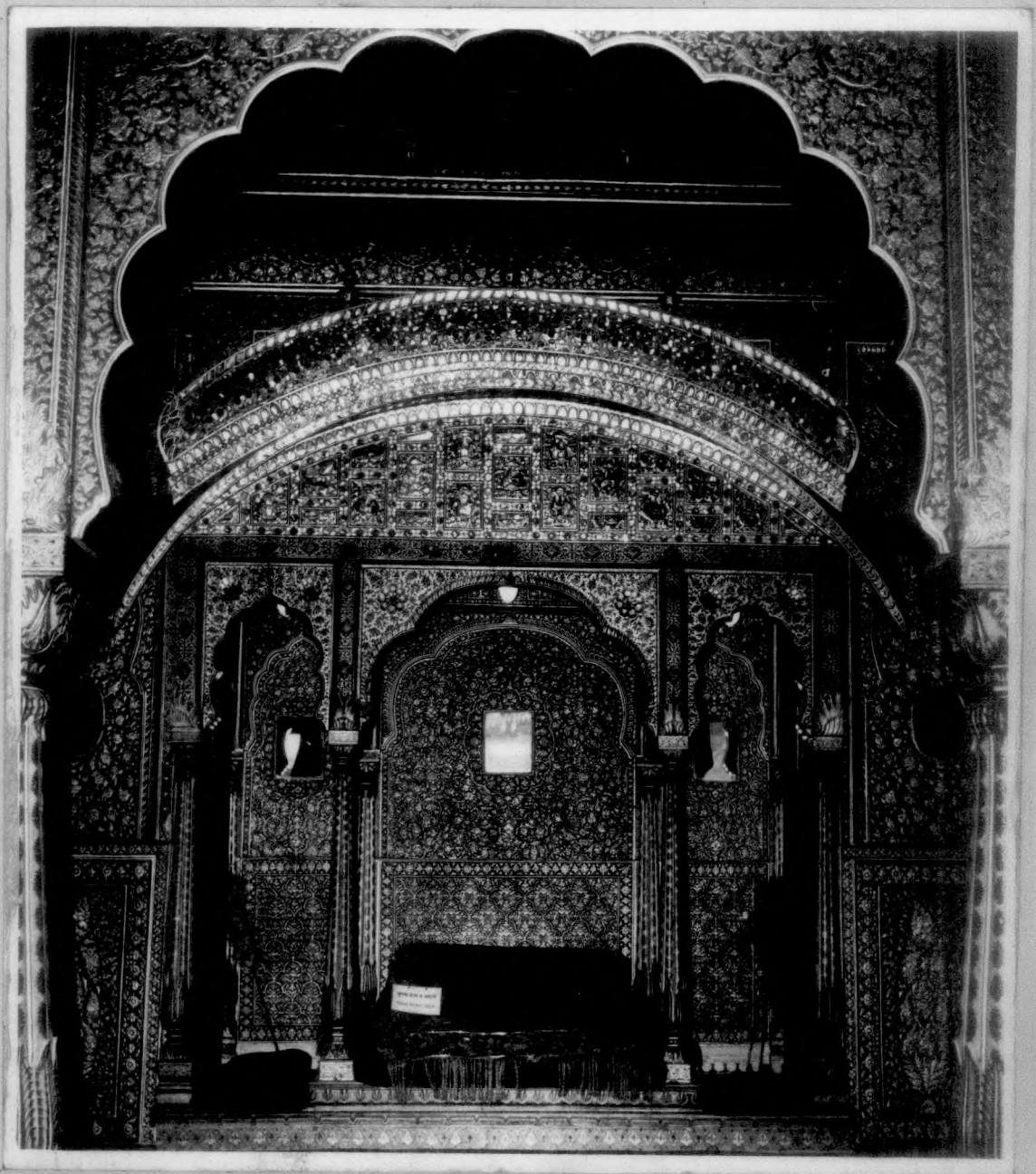


PLATE XXVI



Radha Krishna, Stucco Sculpture in the 'Sal'

PLATE XXVII



Interior of Anup Mahal (decorations in gold leaf work)

PLATE XXVIII



Maharaja Ganga Singh in boyhood
in typical Bikaneri
dress.

PLATE XXIX



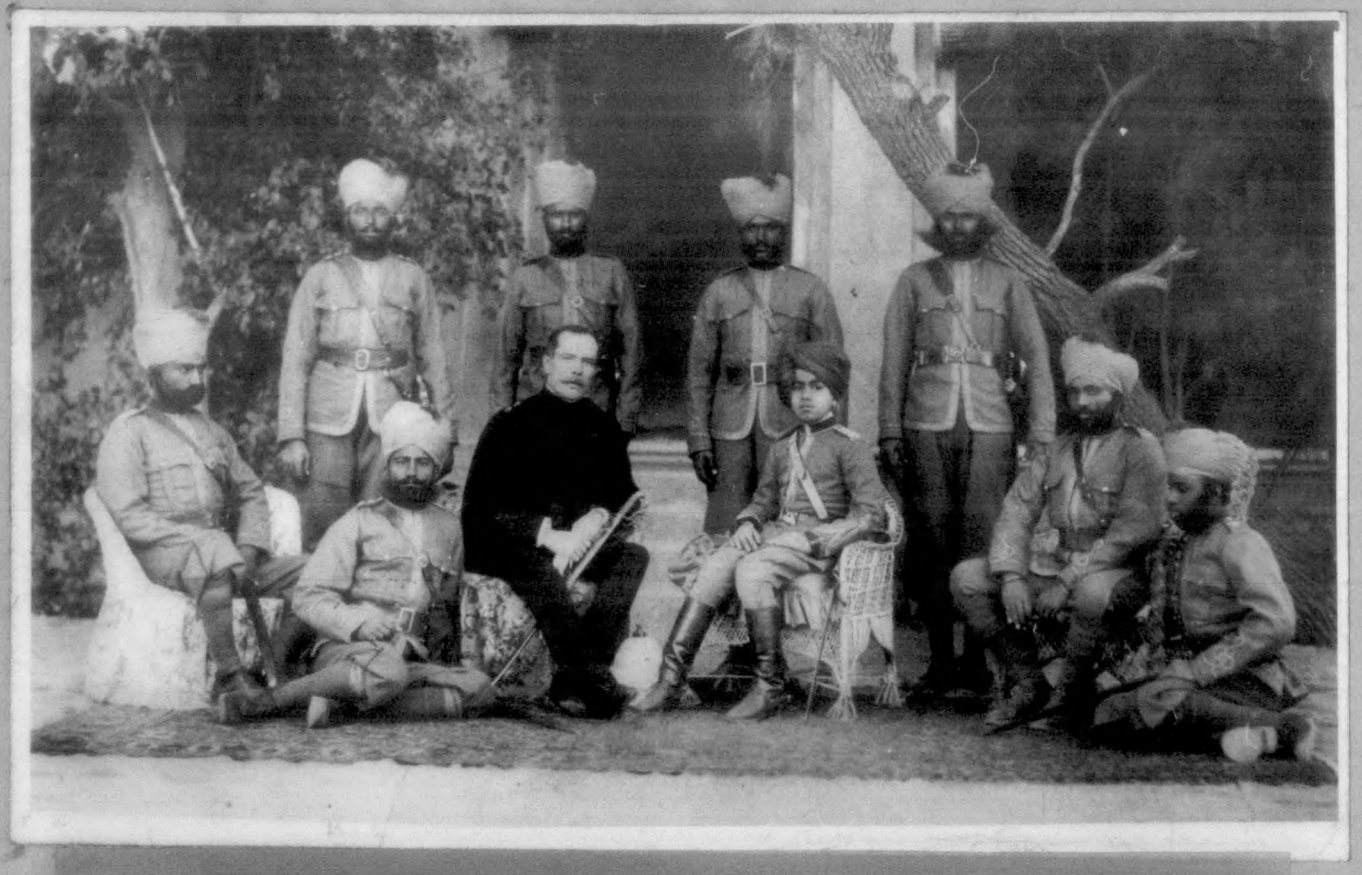
A Bikaner 'noble' in typical Bikaneri dress.

PLATE XXX



The author's daughter, Rajyashree Kumari
in typical Bikaneri dress.

PLATE XXXI



MAHARAJA GANGA SINGH WITH ARMY OFFICERS
(during minority period)

Sitting: L-R; Gurbax Singh; Bakhtawar Singh, Commandant; Col. Kettlewell, Maharaja Ganga Singh; Thakur Bhopal Singh of Bahajan

Standing: L-R; Th. Roop Singh Bauiret of Chantel
Th. Kishan Singh, Rajvi Guman Singh of Boghera.

PLATE XXXII



Maharaja Ganga Singh with King George V
at the War Front.

PLATE XXXIII



Some Statesmen of the Great War

Presented to the National Portrait Gallery by Sir Abe Bailey Bart. K.C.M.G.

Painted by Sir James Guthrie P.R.S.A.

Left to right standing &c. Maharajah of Bikaner India. General Botha S. Africa. Mr G. N. Barnes Sir R. Borden Canada. Lord Balfour. Sir Eric Geddes. Mr Bonar Law. Lord Morris. Newfoundland Lord Kitchener. Seated at table Sir J. Cook. Australia. Mr W. M. Hughes. Australia. Mr Lloyd George. Lord Milner. Mr W. M. Massey. New Zealand. Mr Winston Churchill. Lord Grey. Lord Oxford & Asquith.

PLATE XXXIV



THE SIGNING OF PEACE IN THE HALL OF MIRRORS, VERSAILLES 28th JUNE 1919

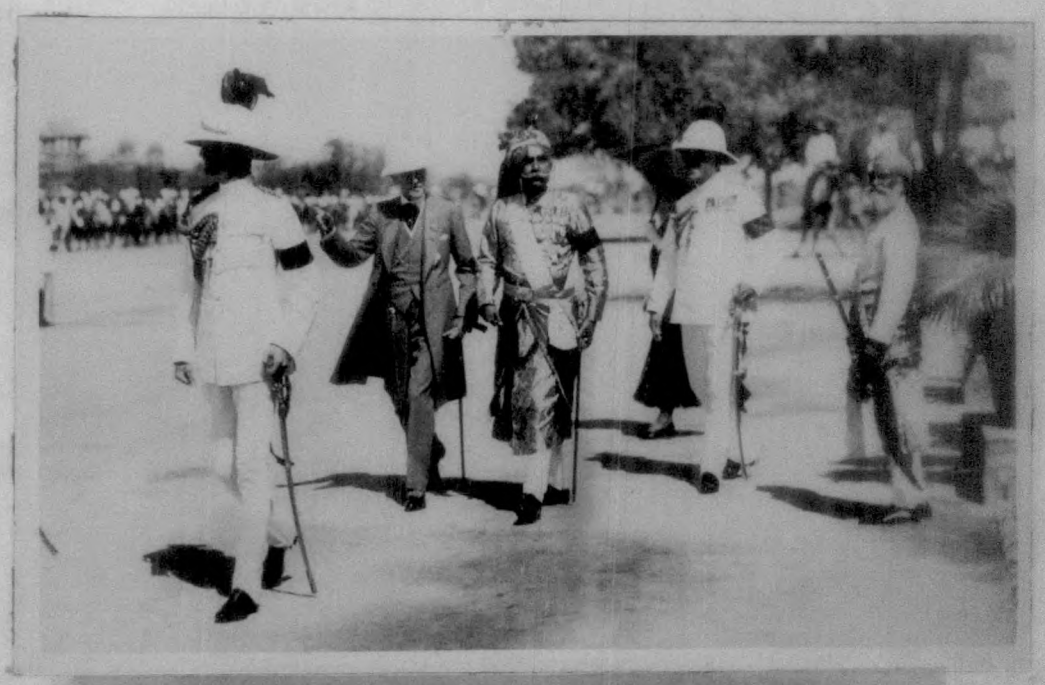
PLATE XXXV



Maharaja Ganga Singh at the Round Table Conference, London, 1930.

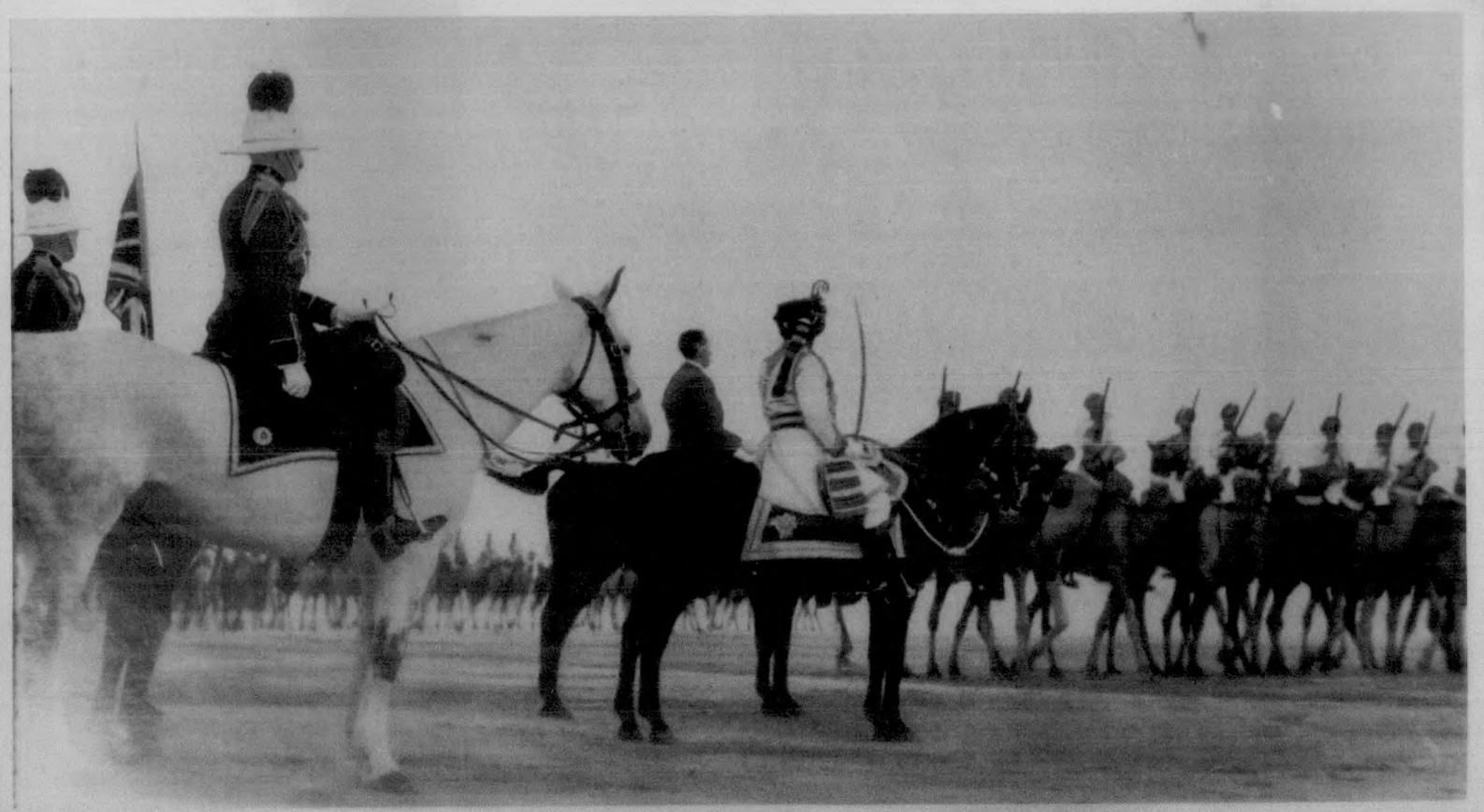
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PLATE XXXVI



Maharaja Ganga Singh with Lord Willingdon,
(1935)

PLATE XXXVII

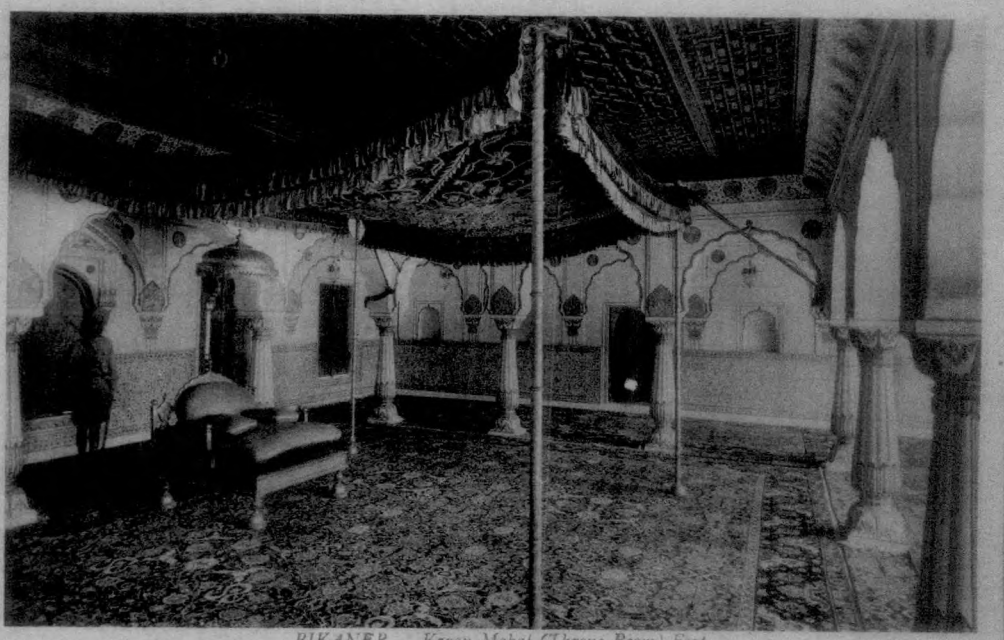


Maharaja Ganga Singh with Lord Linlithgow at an Army Review, 1937



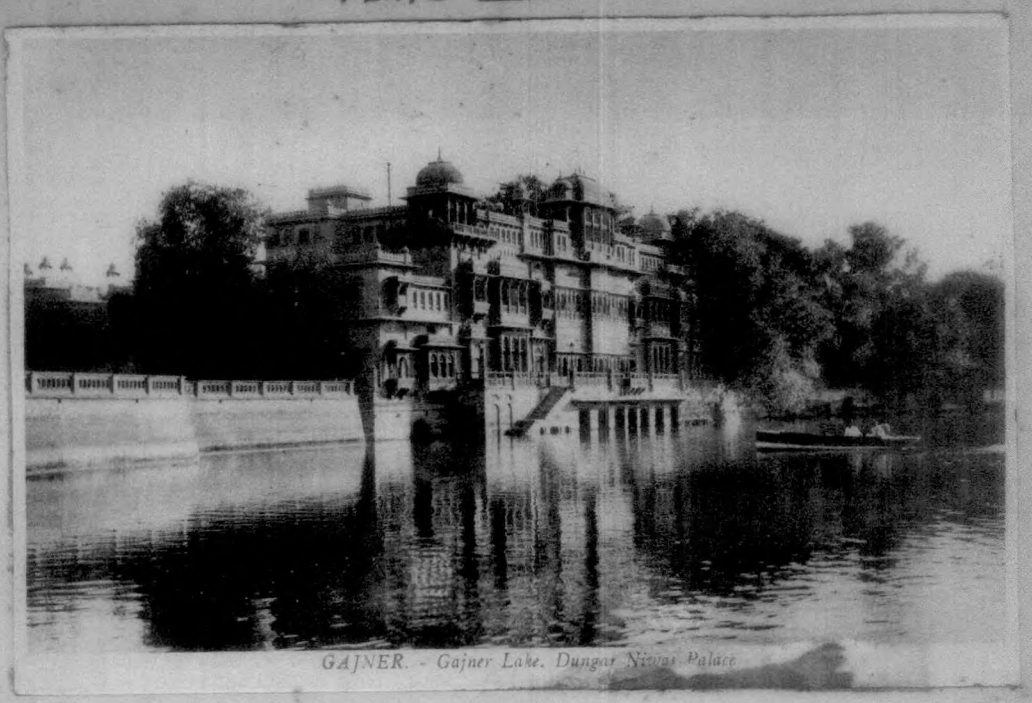
BIKANER. - Lallgarh Palace - Front View

PLATE XXXIX

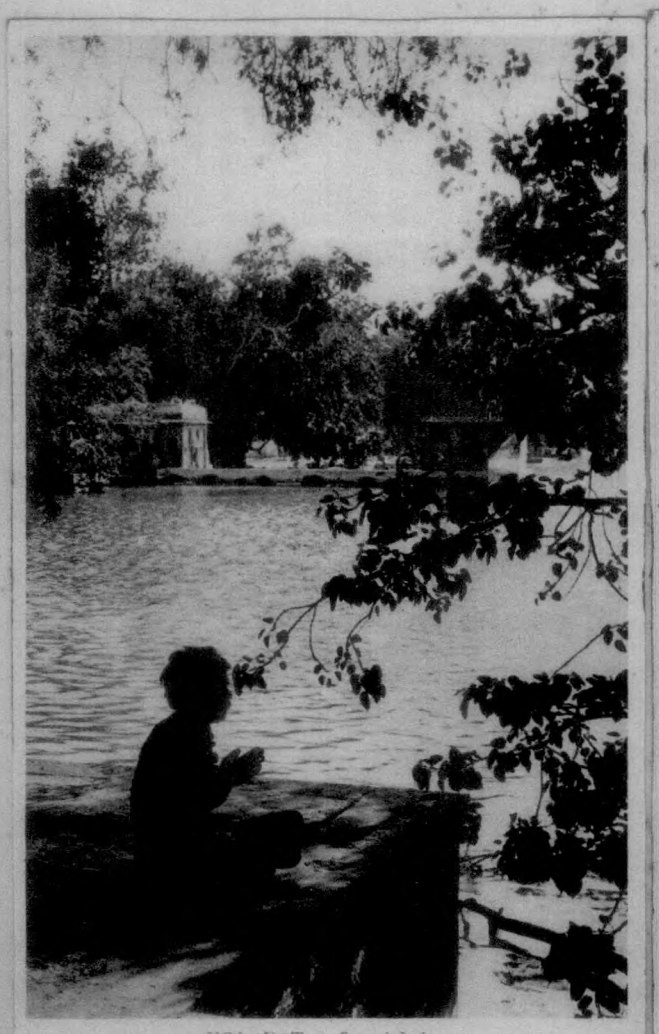


BIKANER. - Karan Mahal (Throne Room) Fort

PLATE XXXX

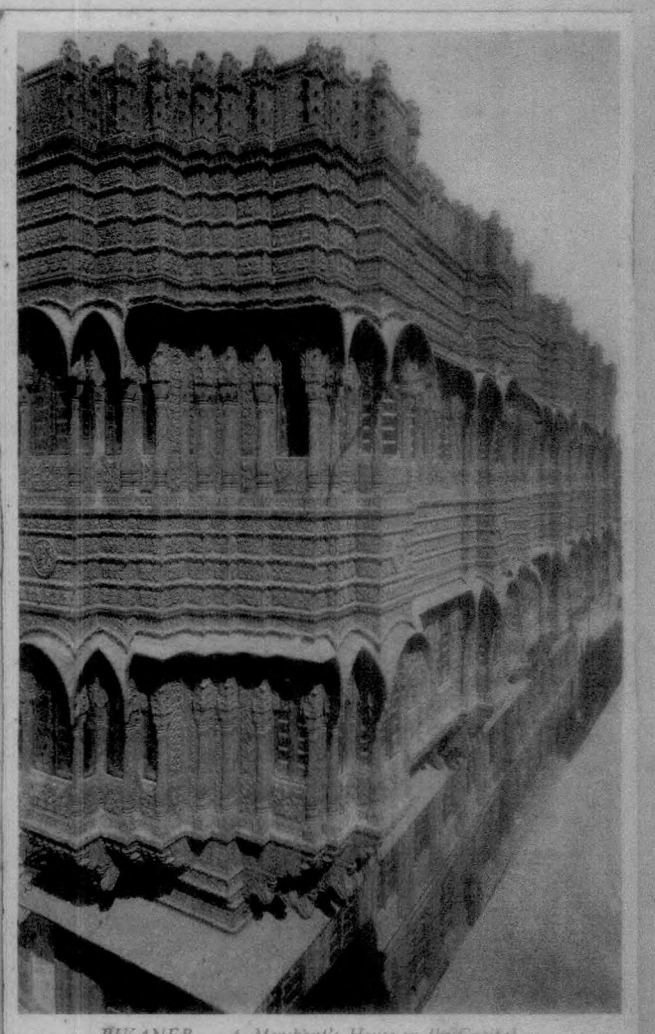


GAJNER. - Gajner Lake. Dungar Niwas Palace



KOLAYAT. - Sacred Lake

PLATE XXXXI



BIKANER. - A Merchant's House in the Capital

PLATE XXXXII

PLATE XXXXIII



BIKANER. - Ganga Jubilee Kutchery (Law Courts and Public Offices)

PLATE XXXXIV



BIKANER. - City Gate

PLATE XXXXV



Dr. Rajendra Prasad, President of India,
seen unveiling the Equestrian Statue

State Coins of Bikaner



















PLATE XXXXVI



APPENDIX I

GOD IS GREAT

AKBAR

Seal:- God is great.

The quintessence of the realm, the pillar of the grand Empire and worthy of favours and obligation, Rai Rai Singh, should acknowledge, that it has come to the sacred notice that he (Rai Rai Singh) is still in the territories of Jaitore. It seems very strange and wonderful. What has become of his sincerity, ambition for work, devotion and friendship? What has happened to him? Is there something wrong with him, or excess of drinking has incapacitated him? Has any disease afflicted him that carried away all his vigour and strength for work, or has he, due to his easy-going nature, succumbed to the insinuations of Bhatiani, or (else) has been misled by Tijia, the slave?

If, in fact, he is tired of work, he should clearly state all facts, so that we may send his son and his (Rai Rai Singh's) attendants with his son might accomplish the task.

Whatever the case might be, we send our trustworthy (servant) Mohan Dass to report the real facts to us. We wished to send a physician as well, but because the said person has been deputed from the Dak Chowki (outpost), (the physician) could not be arranged to accompany him. If however, he is in sound health of body and mind, and contemplates to proceed on the expedition of the Deccan we wish him god-speed. Otherwise, all the soldiers, Rajputs and others, hoping for the royal favours, should, at all costs, convey the Rai to Malwa, so that he might wait at Ujjain till the arrival of the world-conquering armies despatched under the orders of the Court, and in that case should act (according to) what they have been ordered to do.

Dated 22nd Isfandarmuz, 40
(February, 1595)

APPENDIX II

GOD IS GREAT

Seal:- Sultan Salim son of Akbar Shah
son of Humayun etc.

Mandate, obeyed by the world of the
father of the Victorious
Sultan Salim Jahangir
Ghazee.

The trustworthy of the Empire, and worthy of favours and confidence, fit for patronage and obligation, Rai Rai Singh being honoured with the distinction of the royal regards and Imperial blessings, should acknowledge whether it was the result of all his excellent services rendered in the past that associating himself with oblivion, he does never recall his memory to our most noble and sacred mind.

Notwithstanding(his indifference), the courtesies of our sublime presence(i.e. His Majesty himself) have recalled that best of all the well-wishers of the Empire(Rai Rai Singh) at many an auspicious moment.

He should, henceforth, contrary to the past, always be sending his letters, and in response thereto he will be honoured with the gracious replies.

Next, that well-wisher(friend) should know that a certain jeweller was bringing a piece of ruby(to present it) to the slaves of our Court(i.e. ourselves), but that faithful in sincerity (Rai Rai Singh) has unknowingly purchased the same from him. Though we regard the money of that trustworthy as belonging to our estate, yet if the presentation (of that jewel) be unpleasing on the part of that unfaltering in confidence (Rai Singh), the sum of its price would be paid up (to him) by our trustworthy (servant) Lal Miyan.

Being confident of the best regards of our benignself the observer of the whole Empire, as inclined to favour him, he should handover the ruby to Lal Miyan, on the (very) day (he reaches there), that he might bring it to our sublime presence.

A private soft silk robe is sent herewith.

4th Azar Mah-e-Elahi year, 47
(November, 1602)

APPENDIX III

GOD IS GREAT

J A H A N G E E R

Seal:- Sultan Salim son of Akbar Shah son of Humayun etc.

Mandate obeyed by the world of the father of the victorious Sultan Salim Jahangeer Ghazee.

The support of the Empire, the pillar of the realm, worthy of exalted favours, fit for majestic condescensions, deserving the various complaisances, the object of numberless regards, distinguished for the most benign gifts, Rai Rai Singh, being proud of, and honoured by, the interminable affabilities* should know, that during the past few days the foes of His Majesty (Emperor himself) have grown very weak, and that infirmity lingers even at present.

It is necessary, that the support of the Empire (Rai Singh) should instantly, proceed to the Court the asylum of the people, without any delay and with the utmost expedition, and should convey himself post-haste, travelling by day and night, crossing as great a distance as possible.

He should not be detained by anything. Being sure of the (royal) mind, the observer of heavens included in this respect (of his presence in the Court), and taking utmost care, he should not admit of any delay.

Dated 29th Mihr-50 Elahi,
(September, 1605)

APPENDIX IV

GOD IS GREAT

Seal:- Sultan Salim son of Akbar Shah son of Humayun etc.
Mandate obeyed by the world of the father of the victorious Sultan Salim Jahangeer Ghazee.

The chosen of the compeers and contemporaries, worthy of favours and obligation, Rai Rai Singh, being specialised for and elevated by, the Imperial Graces, should know that it has so reached the (royal) ears of honour and glory that the imprudent Dalpat, through his total ignobility and ill-luck, is rough and excessive (in his dealings) with him, (Rai Singh) and consequently he (Rai Singh) has led an army against, and besieged him.

Whereas our generous temper does not tolerate that any son should be so (disgracefully) disposed to his own father, it occurred to our mind, the abode of the manifestations of the (Divine) Grace, that we should appoint (our) victorious armies to punish and chastise him in such a way, as to be an examplary warning for all the imprudent (people).

But as his (Rai Singh's) representation, regarding this matter, had not been received in the Court, it again struck to (our) glorious mind, that it might, perhaps, turn out to be false. Therefore we deferred the despatch of the victorious armies.

If, in fact, this be happened, and that imprudent (Dalpat) be bent upon (mischief), he (Rai Singh) should on the (very) day (he receives this farman), despatch his representation, describing the facts (therein) so that we may despatch the armies from the exalted court, and order them to march on those frontiers to meet him, and to frustrate (take out his life out of him) his objects by inflicting a crushing defeat upon him.

We have commissioned the descendant of the great and dignified nobles Bahauddaula to elevate and bring that worthy of favours (to the Court), but his coming has been delayed for a few days due to the infirmity of illness. He was also (ordered) to report about that matter, so that, the mandate, to be obeyed by the world, be issued in his name (to the effect) that he may bring that worthy of regards (Rai Singh) along with him in the exalted and illustrious Court.

It is necessary that he (Rai Singh) should always be

confident of the Imperial favours to be inclined to his affairs.

Dated Aban 2
Rajab-ul-Murajjab, 1015 A.H.
(November, 1607)

APPENDIX V

AKBAR

Seal:- Jalaluddin Mohammad Akbar Badshah, son of Humayun Badshah, son of Babar Badshah son of Umar Sheikh Mirza, son of Sultan A b u Sayeed Mirza, son of Miran Shah, son of Amir Timur Sahib Qiran.

The exalted edict, worth-submission, just now received the honour of being issued, (to the effect) that the pargana of Niryad, as specified in the endorsement, be conferred, as Jagir, upon Rai Rai Singh, the quintessence of realm and consummate in sincerity and devotion, in exchange for the parganas of Tahara, Qasur and Atgarh, from the beginning of the 'Kharif' (Autumn) crop of Bichi-il, 41; and that he, taking possession of its products, should acquit himself of his duties with due devotion and ministry.

It is the duty of the Chaudharis, the Headmen, the Kanungos, the ryot and the cultivators of the said pargana, that they should, acting in obedience to the written (order) regard the aforesaid (Rai Singh) as their Jagirdar, and should not disregard the words and suggestions of his Vakils (agents), which are entirely in accordance with the all-binding (Imperial) orders, and in keeping with the administrative transactions.

They should also account for the necessary dues and civil obligations, without any excuse or negligence, and should not allow any delay or curtailment in its payment. They should essentially regard this as extremely important and of indisputable diligence.

Regarding it as in agreement with the auspicious mandate, they should not disobey or deviate from this order.

Dated 5th Urdi Bihisht, 41
(April, 1596)

APPENDIX VI

AKBAR

Seal:- Jalaluddin Mohammad Akbar Badshah, son of Humayun Badshah, son of Babar Badshah, son of Umar Sheikh Mirza, son of Sultan Abu Sayeed Mirza, son of Miran Shah, son of Amir Timur Sahib Qiran.

Whereas courtesy to the strangers and the pardoning of sins is a praise-worthy quality of the Royalty, we have, after forgiving the wrongs of Rai Rai Singh, the descendant of the Noblesse and worthy of favours, distinguished him by manifold royal graces, and allowed him to depart after restoring (the Jagir of) Junagarh and other districts, which we had recently conferred upon him, as specified in the endorsement, from the beginning of "Rabi" (the spring crop) of till year-43.

The duty of the clerks employed in the province of Gujrat (generally), and the Jagirdars of Surat particularly is that no sooner they receive the knowledge of the contents obeyed by the heavens, than they should, submitting to the exalted order, commit over the districts, as detailed in the endorsement to his deputies. They should not hesitate in compliance for (want of) attested and inscribed mandate; for that too would follow soon after its completion.

The tenants of those parganas, regarding the aforesaid (Rai Singh) as their Jagirdar, should obey him in paying all the revenues and necessary obligations.

Dated 9th of Dai, 42

From

Lahore, the Capital.
(February, 1597)

APPENDIX VII

God is Great

Seal: Jalaluddin Mohammad Akbar Badshah, son of Humayun Badshah, son of Babar Badshah, son of Umar Sheikh Mirza, son of Sultan Abu Sayeed Mirza, son of Miran Shah, son of Amir Timur Sahib Qiran.

FARMAN OF JALALUDDIN MOHAMMAD AKBAR BADSHAH-E-GHAZEE.

The exalted and auspicious mandate, has, just now received the honour of being issued and the dignity of being announced (to the effect) that henceforth, considering the pargana of Shamsabad as two, one of them, as before, be given the name of Shamsabad, and the other that of Noorpur. The villages lying on this side of the river Ganges should be regarded as comprising of the pargana of Noorpur, and should be called and recorded as such, while those on the opposite bank should be considered as belonging to the pargana of Shamsabad.

Both the above parganas as regards the Jama (rental), should be conferred as jagir upon the choice of the peers and equals, Rai Rai Singh Rathore, and should be regarded as preserved and secure from all alloys of change or alteration.

Whereas the said Mahal (district) had been attached to the Jagir of Rathores since long, we have, as a token of (our)great favour, bestowed both the parganas upon him as their native jagir (for residence).

The respectable governors, the great and expert Diwans, the tax-collectors, the Fief-holders, the Comptrollers of the civil affairs and the clerks of the Supreme Diwan, regarding the above-mentioned as confirmed, should record it in their registers (accordingly), and should allow no variation, modification or curtailment (therein).

The Chaudharis, the Kanungos, the Headmen, the tenants and cultivators of that place acting in accordance with (our) holy order, and in obedience to the exalted mandate, should, henceforth record the above Mahal (district) as two in their accountbook, and believing Rai Singh as their Jagirdar should not hesitate in paying the necessary dues to him.

They should not evade this order.

Dated 21st Khurdad Elahi 49 year.
(May, 1604)

APPENDIX VIII

AURANGZEB

The choice of the equals and contemporaries, Anup Singh, submissive to Islam, hoping for the Imperial condescension, should know, that Banwalidas, his brother reached our heaven-like threshbld as led by his good fortune, received the honour of paying obeisance to the exalted Royalty and became the object of Imperial favours. The facts about his (Anup Singh's) unfaltering devotion and allegiance have been brought to (our) ears of total truth through Jaffar Khan, the curator of the sublime empire, the (most) trustworthy of all the esteemed viziers the choice of the high-stationed "Khans" (Chiefs), the manager of the affairs of State and Government, the guide of the open roads, of prosperity and glory, worthy of various kinds of favours, fit for manifold regards, the fotune-marked chief, the essence of the Kingdom, and the centre of important affairs (Mudar-ul-Muham).

It has also been brought to our notice that Rao Karan became suspicious of and displeased with that choice of the peers (Anup Singh) and hankers after incurring him loss, and that the said worthy of favours (Anup Singh) requests that if he is favoured with the succession to his father, he would perform all the necessary rites of devotionand fidelity quite commendably.

We had, hence, issued order to that best of all the dignified ministers (Jaffar Khan), that he should, in obedience to our exalted order, write him a letter, regarding an inquiry into this case. That young plant of the high-stationed adorners (i.e. youthful ruler Anup Singh) wrote that in case the great gift and sublime favour were bestowed on him, and the exalted order, adorned with the auspicious impression of the hand(with fingers expanded) were issued in his name, he could be able to acquit himself creditably of the charge of administrating and organising that place, and guarding the fort of Bikaner. This fact caused an addition in (our) sublime favours.

Whereas the aforesaid (Rao Karan) did not perform any work

or service in these days, and due to his wretchedness he took to lethargy in (carrying out) our orders, always to be obeyed, and had, once more, become the object of various wrongs; hence we, in token of our great condescension, granted that leader of the peers (Anup Singh) the Mansab of 2000 "Zate" (personal) and 1500 horse, that, after the demise of Rao Sur, was granted to Karan, in the reign of (Shah Jahan, the late) King, (now) protected by the (Divine) pardon, glorified as Rizwan (the keeper of paradise), with his resting place in paradise, and abode in the sublimest part of heaven, Firdaus Ashiani (the title of the deceased king, Shah Jahan).

Similarly, we have elevated him by the grant of the title of Rao, a rich robe of honour, the standard horse, and the State of Bikaner with the adjoining districts, that belonged to the native place or the Jagir of Karan, according to a separate endorsement, that would also be despatched with this royal mandate, exemplary of honour and dignity.

With a view to elevate and console that choice of the peers, we have adorned this light diffusing decree with the auspicious impression of our hand (with expanded fingers), and have sent it per Saifullah, the worthy of favours, who is one of the trustworthy born-slaves of the Court of heavenly grandeur.

He should on the receipt of this exalted mandate, and taking into consideration the worth of our sublime condescension, offer his thanks for these gifts and favours. He should try his utmost in quieting and conciliating the servants of Karan, uniting them with him and in guarding and watching the fort of that place and the districts belonging to Bikaner.

He should keep his mind satisfied in every way(himself), being firm on the straight path of trust and confidence, and being constant on the direct road of loyalty and fidelity. An order has been issued to Alaf Khan, Jagirdar of Pargana Fatehpur and Jhunjhunu, Amanat Khan, Faujdar of Ajmer, the city of prosperity, and to Rasakdas, the Mutsaddi (clerk) of Chakla Hissar (to the effect) that, being ready with a large force they should

at the time of war, afford that worthy of favours, every necessary help and aid.

Getting knowledge of other facts through the despatch of that trustworthy of the exalted Empire (Jaffar Khan), and through the words of Saifullah, he (Anup Singh) should act accordingly, and should send his note with the aforesaid to the (royal threshold of heavenly eminence.

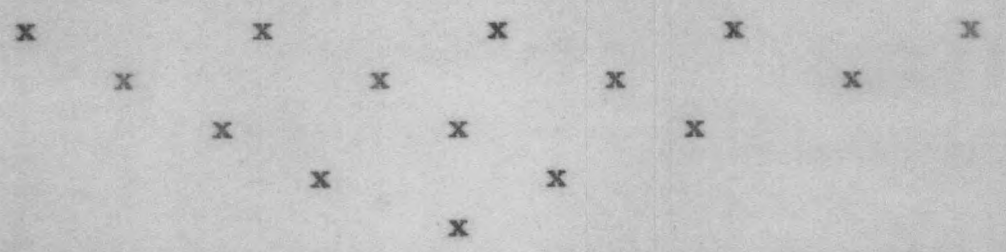
Banwalidas, his brother, who, on the recommendation of that worthy of favours, has also been caressed now by the (royal) sublime favours, was granted leave.

6th Rubi-ul-Awwal, 10
(11th January 1667)

APPENDIX IX

Extract from letter dated 27th July, 1858 from Brigadier General G.St. P. Lawrence, Offg. Agent to the Governor-General Rajputana, to G.F. Edmonstone, Secretary to Government of India, Foreign Department.

.....



28. On quitting Abu on the 1st June, I had left an Assistant Lt. Mildmay, in indifferent health, incharge of the office. But a fortnight later his health having improved, I deputed him to Bikaner to lead the troops of that State, who were cooperating with General Van Cortdland's Punjab levies in the revolted districts of Sirsa, Hissar and Hansie. Lt. Mildmay found the Maharaja, with a zeal rare in a native Prince, at his frontier fortress of Bhadra, commanding his own troops. Thence Lt. Mildmay, with a reinforcement of 800 Bikaner horse, proceeded to General Van Cortdland's camp.

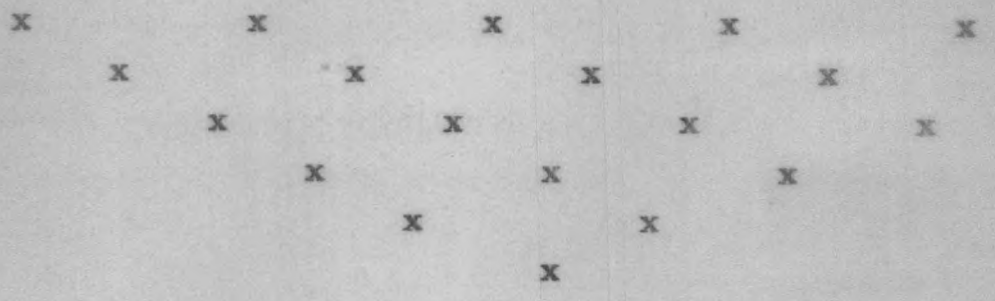
29. Bikaner troops for a short time garrisoned both Hansi and Hissar, and Lt. Mildmay commanded at the former place on the 19th August, when it was attacked by about 3000 of our mutinous sepoys and rebellious villagers. They were repulsed and cut up. Lt. Mildmay's Report to General Van Cortdland, under whose orders he was acting, has been doubtless brought by the latter officer to the notice of Government.

30. Both Lt. Mildmay and the Maharaja of Bikaner experienced the same difficulties with these levies, as I have before mentioned was uniformly the case with those of Mewar and Marwar; they would not act on the offensive: but the support and personal example of the Maharaja and the presence of his troops strengthen our cause.

31. The great wealth and influence of some families in Bikaner, and the consequent factions and intrigues they caused much weakened the hands of His Highness the Maharaja, and on this

being pointed out to me by Lt. Mildmay, I took the opportunity to dismiss a member of one of these families - the Vakil at this Agency, who for many years had made his position subservient to his own interests.

32. Lt. Mildmay kept the field with the Bikaner auxiliaries till the month of October, when his health again failing, he, having received my thanks and those of the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab for his services, proceeded to England on sick certificate.



APPENDIX X

Copy of letter dated Camp Garud the 24th September, 1857 from Lt. A.G.Holm Mildmay, Assistant Agent to the Governor-General, Rajputana on special duty in Bikaner to Brigadier General George St. Patrick Lawrence, Agent to the Governor-General, Rajputana.

...

General Van Cortlandt having dispensed with the services of the major part of the force of His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner retaining only 200 foot and 150 horse, and I myself being from frequent and prolonged attacks of fever pronounced by Dr. Lamb in Medical charge of the force as totally unfit for active service, having indeed been confined to my bed till within a day of my departure from Hansee on the 16th instant, I have accompanied His Highness troops on their return to Bikaner and have now the honour to bring to your notice such service as they have been able to perform in the hope that it may be in your power to gratify His Highness by a Kharita of acknowledgement from yourself and to procure him the honour of a similar letter from the Governor-General.

2. It was unfortunate that the Bikaner troops arrived too late to be at the actions of Odhwala and Khaisakaz, and only entered Sirsa at the same time as General Van Cortlandt's force. A few days after their arrival there however, a detachment of 500 of them was sent by General Van Cortlandt under command of Lieutenant Pears to occupy Hissar. This detachment was afterwards increased to 1700, whether necessarily or otherwise a matter of question at the time, but the subsequent attack on Hissar by the Mungalee and other Nanghur neighbouring villagers leaves it scarcely a matter of doubt now.

3. This force held Hissar for three weeks without opposition overawing the evil disposed of the city and the surrounding villages till the arrival of General Van Cortlandt's force, many lambardars coming in during that time and making their submission to Lieutenant Pears.

4. During the three weeks that General Van Cortlandt's force remained at Hissar, the Bikaner horse were constantly employed on detachment duty for the apprehension of criminals and

collection of revenue, and on the 21st July I took over 1000 men and two guns by the General's order to relieve Hansee, which had been attacked by the rebels, and left there a garrison of 500 men who held the town for three weeks until the arrival of the General on the 8th of August.

5. Two hundred Bikaneerees were also sent to reinforce this garrison, on an alarm of an intended attack on the 4th August, The whole of the Bikaner horse were present with me at the burning of Hajimpore on the 23rd August and the Maharaja's bodyguard assisted in the repulse of the rebel infantry from the walls of the town in the action fought by the troops under my command at Hissar, on the 19th of the same month - the walls being occupied by the Bikaner garrison under Chiman Ram Perohit -of the few Bikaneerees at the taking of Bathool with Lieutenant Pears, one Kaith Singh Rathore of Shampoora so distinguished himself by his bravery in mounting the rampart in face of the enemy's fire as to call for the particular notice of Mr. Ford, the Collector who was present.

6. Two of the Bikaner guns were sent by desire of the General to the attack on Mungalee, and the Tahseel at Tosham was held for some time by a detachment of Bikaneerees, and though they at length allowed themselves to be deceived by the Mussalman inhabitants and surprised at the gates by the rebel force, yet the party at the Tahsil itself fought bravely for the protection of the Tahsildar and Thanedar losing the three chiefs then present at the Tahsil, namely Mokum Singh of Neembana, Mithoo Singh Rathore of Kojra and Kooman Singh Rathore of Tirpalli also Goman Singh jatoo and only succumbing to overpowering numbers.

7. They have also formed part of the garrison at Hissar since ~~since~~ the departure of General Van Cortlandt and 200 of them are still employed in that capacity.

8. The whole of the Bikaneer horse were present at the taking of Jamalpore where they had one man wounded, they were not engaged as neither were any of the other bodies of horse present.

9. The Maharaja himself was for some time with a considerable force on the frontier at great expense and personal inconvenience to himself, and the events that have occured since his departure have I think shown that his presence there kept the ill-disposed Ranghurs of Mungalee, Srivaisu and other villages in his vicinity quiet for the time.

10. Nearly the whole force was rendered unfit for service at Hansee by fever and they have lost many men thereby among them I regret to say their principal Motmids Sajee (Shahji) Lal Chand and Lakhmichand Seranas (Suranas) since the arrival of whom and their relative and colleague Fateh Chand Surana and Thakoor Hukam Singh Bhatee, neither General Van Cortlandt or myself have ever once had occasion to complain of their delay in or unwillingness to comply at once to the utmost of their ability with any requisition that was made, although I regret to say such was not the case with their predecessors.

11. In conclusion I trust that although I have had no deeds of daring bravery to record, yet that the assistance given by the Maharaja's troops may be considered such by you as to warrant your sending His Highness a Kharita of acknowledgement and thanks and I would suggest the policy of mentioning by name those whose services I have particularised in order to call forth more zeal on any future occasion, the Maharaja's own warmth and heartiness in our cause certainly deserve such an acknowledgment.

12. I should have done myself the honour of addressing you before, but have been so utterly prostrated by illness, that I have been till now unable to sit up and have no one with me able to write English or I would have dictated this letter.

...

APPENDIX XI

Copy of letter dated 21st December, 1860 from the Agent to the Governor-General, Rajputana to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department.

;.....;

In forwarding the accompanying Kharita with the original translation in English which was enclosed in it, from His Highness the Maharaja of Bikaner to His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, I have the honour to request you will do me the favour of submitting the following observations for the consideration of His Lordship.

2. It may be considered irregular to reopen a subject which perhaps has been regarded as closed by His Excellency's bestowal of rewards at the great Darbar at Agra in November, 1859 upon those who had performed good services during the mutinies, and it may also appear indelicate to refer to the recommendations made at that time by Major Eden officiating Agent Governor-General. At the risk however of being thought to exceed the customary rules of official etiquette I feel I should be wanting in my duty to Government who so liberally and generously granted honours and rewards to the deserving did I not bring to His Excellency's notice an omission which was then made in the case of Bikaner in the hope if possible of its being rectified.

3. Since my return it has become evident to me that Jeypore is the only State in Rajputana whose Court is satisfied with the rewards it has received whilst their amount and nature has caused a feeling of despondency in Bikaner and others who having performed in my opinion greater services than Jaipur have not received the notice bestowed on the latter State. Indeed whilst I am writing this letter the Jhalawar Raj Rana who suffered very heavy losses and hardly escaped with his life for refusing the rebel forces supplies has in a private conference bitterly complained to me of the inadequacy of his reward which was fixed at a Khilat of Rs.2000/- whilst his father-in-law the Minister of Jaipur received one of Rs.5000/-.

Though Major Eden from his previous position as Political

Agent at Jaipur and the very great obligations he was under to the Maharaja was perhaps naturally anxious to secure for that State adequate attention to its wishes yet he does not seem to have kept in mind the comparative services of Bikaner Karauli &c which were not so immediately brought under his notice during the mutinies. The accounts of the services rendered by these however I had left on record in the office and by this record I think he should have been guided more than he was.

To the official record therefore as far as the complaint of the Maharaja of Bikaner is concerned I would beg to refer His Excellency the Governor-General. In my despatch of the 6th January 1859 I observed

> "Sardar Singh Maharaja of Bikaner has from the commencement of the outbreak actively exhibited the most loyal friendship and devotion to the British Government and warmly cooperated with us in the field.
>
> The Government of India is already well acquainted with the Raja's services in rescuing, affording refuge to, and supplying the wants of several Europeans. The troops of this province were employed under General Van Cortlandt in Hansee and Hissar. The excellent conduct of the Maharaja who at the head of his troops proceeded to his own frontier, then prepared to join us where and whenever required, presented a most notable example not only to his own dependents but to the princes of Rajputana and displayed a spirit and energy not elsewhere met with. I consider the Maharaja is deserving of the highest scale of reward which the Government may be pleased to sanction to the most meritorious of Rajput States. One of the confiscated palaces at Delhi might also be awarded."

My report of the 31st July 1858 mentioned the good services of this Chief and referred Government to the reports of General Van Cortlandt and the Government of the Punjab for an account of the aid bestowed on us by His Highness and his troops.

The Maharaja's English letter now sent does not overstate the circumstances and I am bound to concur in all brought forward by His Highness who at the commencement of the outbreak at once proceeded to his extreme border to assist us and by his ~~stre~~ courage and the example of his loyalty checked disaffection and gave confidence to the wavering. No Prince in Rajputana save Bikaner took the field in person in our favour without

hesitation. No Prince gave the like aid in searching out and rescuing fugitives though all gave their hospitable shelter and support, and no other Prince exhibited such purely disinterested motives in giving us his active assistance and none but the Bikaner Raja suffered so heavy a loss of Rajput kindered and chiefs whilst fighting purely in our cause.

It was for these reasons that I considered and still consider the loyalty and good services of the Bikaner Raja superior to those of any other Chief in Rajputana including Jaipur and such as to entitle him in my opinion to be ranked in the same category as the Rajas of Rewah and Chirkaree who have been rewarded with grants of land in addition to the receipt of Khilat and other honorary distinctions.

I would beg to draw His Lordship's attention to the latter part of the Maharaja's letter in which he alludes to 45 villages known by the names of Durba &c having been confiscated from the territory of Bikaner. In the absence of my office records I am unable to state fully the causes of the above confiscation or the reasons why the restitution of the villages which was formerly the subject of correspondence has been delayed so long. The Vakil of His Highness in attendance on me states that the villages yield Rs.30000/- a year, that they had been for 300 years in his master's possession but that when the British forces entered Bhuteeanah to enforce the subjugation of the country a few interested parties gave out that the Durba District also belonged to the Bhattees and it was consequently taken possession of.

I am unable to vouch for the truth of the above statement without further enquiry but in case His Excellency the Governor-General should on a fresh review of the conduct of the Bikaner Chief during the mutinies regard his case with favour, I would beg leave to suggest that if the grant of the villages sought by His Highness should be found inconvenient with respect to their situation in Hissar a portion equal in value of the territory of Bhutteanah which projects considerably in a long

strip amongst independent States to the North West might be given.

If I have exceeded the limits of my duty in bringing this case before His Excellency the sense of justice to a faithful ally and of consciousness that my government would not desire to allow this really valuable service of the Bikaner Chief to go unrewarded must be my excuse which I feel confident will be accepted by His Lordship.

....

APPENDIX XIII

Copy of a Kharita dated the 31st December, 1883 from Lord Ripon, to Maharaja Dungar Singh.

...

I have heard with much concern from Colonel Bradford, my Agent in Rajputana, of the disturbances which have occurred in Your Highness' State during the course of this year. I have now received full reports from Colonel Bradford upon the cause of those disturbances and upon the measures which he recommends for the restoration of order in Bikaner. It appears that, in spite of all warnings to the contrary, Your Highness has remained in the hands of evil advisers, and that for some years past there has been no improvement in the administration of the State. Numerous abuses have been allowed to prevail, and the condition of the State has become more and more serious, until at last Your Highness' authority has been openly defied; and it has been necessary for the British Government at your Highness' request to put down rebellion in your territory by the despatch of an armed force.

My friend, the British Government cannot permit the recurrenc of such a state of affairs. I shall always be ready to preserve the legitimate authority of the Native Chiefs of India against unlawful rebellion; but it is my duty to prevent the dominions of Native Chiefs from falling into a condition of anarchy and disorder which render rebellion possible. In the present case it appears clear to me that the State of Bikaner cannot be preserved from disorder in the future unless Your Highness is aided in the administration of your territories for a time at least, by the constant presence and support of a British Officer, and I have desired Colonel Bradford to inform your Highness that a resident Political Agent will now be appointed to Bikaner. I am very reluctant to interfere with the internal administration of Native States, and Captain Talbot, the Officer whom I have selected for the post, will not be ordered to assume the direct control of the Government, but it is necessary that Your Highness should consult him freely and be guided by his advice;

and Colonel Bradford will inform Your Highness of the matters upon which I consider it specially desirable that he should afford Your Highness the advantages of his counsel and assistance.

I trust that Your Highness will unreservedly acquiesce in these arrangements, and will endeavour by every means in your power to restore good order throughout your territories, and to regain the confidence of the British Government.

....

APPENDIX XIV

Copy of a Kharita dated the 2nd February, 1887 from Lord Dufferin to Maharaja Dungar Singh.

...

A few months ago I was informed by my Agent in Rajputana that the affairs of Your Highness's State were not being conducted in accordance with the wishes of the Government of India as explained to Your Highness in Lord Ripon's Kharita of the 31st December, 1883. It appeared that you were generally not disposed to follow the advice of the Political Agent in Bikanir, and that you were being encouraged in this unwise conduct by certain persons, some of whom were foreigners who had been employed in the State without the consent of the Political Agent, while others were natives of Bikanir. I received this intelligence with concern and dissatisfaction; for it seemed to indicate that Your Highness had openly violated the restrictions which were deliberately imposed upon your authority when it was found necessary, at Your Highness's request, to support your power by the intervention of British troops. I therefore instructed Sir Edward Bradford to give Your Highness an opportunity of explaining your proceedings in this matter. I desired him at the same time to convey to Your Highness a clear warning that, unless you were ready to act unreservedly upon the arrangements which were sanctioned by Lord Ripon at the end of the year 1883, with the object of avoiding more direct interference in your State, it might become necessary to revise those arrangements in a manner likely to be unpalatable to Your Highness, since it would not be possible for the Government of India to allow Your Highness to act in a manner which would tend to disorganise the administration of your State. I also informed Sir Edward Bradford that the Political Agent was at liberty to cause measures to be adopted for the removal from Your Highness's capital of any Bikanir officials whose influence might be having an injurious effect.

Sir Edward Bradford has now acquainted me with the steps which were taken by himself and the Political Agent in pursuance

of my orders, and has submitted to me a copy of the Kharita Your Highness addressed to him on the 27th October last. I have carefully considered the reasons and arguments put forward by Your Highness, and with much reluctance I am constrained to inform you that I cannot regard them as accounting adequately for the employment, without reference to the Political Agent, of foreigners in your State. I also regret to observe that the removal from your capital of the Bikanir officials, to whose presence the Political Agent took exception, was not effected without difficulty.

My friend, my object in writing to you now is to earnestly caution you once more against a course of action which would end in results extremely distasteful to Your Highness.

The Government of India, as Lord Ripon explained to Your Highness, are very unwilling to interfere with the internal administration of Native States, but are at the same time unable to allow that administration to fall into a disorganised condition. On these principles my distinguished predecessor framed the restrictions which he placed upon your authority as a Ruler. Sir Edward Bradford has correctly indicated them to you, and I am convinced and resolved that they must be maintained. I trust therefore that I shall not be compelled to revert to this subject, and that Your Highness will for the future loyally seek and conform to the advice of the Political Agent at Bikanir, more especially in regard to the choice of your officials. In this hope I have determined to defer further consideration of more stringent measures; and, if Your Highness will spare me the painful task altogether, I shall feel relieved and gratified.

I remain with much consideration,

Your sincere friend,

Dufferin,

Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

APPENDIX XV

Copy of letter No: 1308-1309, dated Abu the 26th March, 1919 from Lt. Col. A.D.Macpherson, I.A., First Assistant to the Agent to the Governor-General, in Rajputana to the Political Member, Bikaner State Council, Bikaner.

...

I am directed to inform you that under the instructions of the Government of India the Political supervision of the State of Bikaner and Sirohi has been transfered, as a temporary measure, to the Hon'ble the Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana and all correspondence therefore emanating from your office which has hitherto been addressed to the Political Agent Western Rajputana States, should in future be directed to the First Assistant to the Hon'ble the Agent to the Governor-General in Rajputana, Mount Abu, of which post I have assumed the charge with effect from the 26th instant.

Mr. L.W. Reynolds, M.C, C.I.E, I.C.S., has been posted as Resident, Western Rajputana States in charge of the States of Marwar and Jaisalmer.

APPENDIX XVI

(TO)

His Imperial Majesty the King-Emperor
Buckingham Palace
LONDON.

Having just heard of outbreak of hostilities between Russia France and Germany I beg leave most dutifully should Great Britain also have resort to arms to palce my own sword and services at Your Imperial Majesty's Command either as Member of Your Imperial Majesty's staff or at the head of my Troops and Rajputs all of whom are equally eager to fight for Your Imperial Majesty in Europe India or elsewhere for the safety honour and welfare of Your Imperial Majesty and your Dominions. I have great honour and privilege of having served Your Imperial Majesty as Aide-de-Camp longer than any other Indian Chief and whether my Troops can be employed at present or not I implore Your Imperial Majesty most earnestly if the Empire is involved to give me an opportunity for that personal military service which is highest ambition of a Rathore Rajput Chief and to be graciously pleased to command me to at once proceed to the Front in Europe. I should esteem it highest honour possible to serve during War on Your Imperial Majesty's Staff but am ready to go anywhere in any capacity for privilege of serving my Emperor in War as I have endeavoured to serve him in peace during last twelve years. As the opportunity is one of a lifetime I humbly beseach Your Imperial Majesty not to leave me here inactive if the Forces of the Empire are engaged for the duty of a Rathore Chief calls me to fighting service. I have made complete arrangements for administration of my State in my absence and I am ready to sail immediately I am telegraphing to Viceroy officially offering services of self and Troops.

Ganga Singh.

Bikaner,
3.8.1914

...

APPENDIX XVII

(To)

His Excellency The Viceroy,
Viceroy's Camp-India.

I and my Troops are ready and prepared to go at once to any place, either in Europe or India, or wherever our services might be usefully employed in interests of safety honour and welfare of our Sovereign and his Dominions.

Your Excellency knows the traditions of the Rathore Bika Rajputs. We long to be early at the Front.

But whether my Troops can be used at present or not, I would earnestly ask Your Excellency at least to give me myself an opportunity for that personal military service of the King Emperor and the Empire, which is my highest ambition as a Rathore Chief and as a Member of His Imperial Majesty's staff.

Complete arrangements have been made for administration(of) State in absence and can leave immediately.

Maharaja of Bikaner.

3.8.1914

APPENDIX XVIII

Telegram dated the 4th August, 1914 from King Emperor to the Maharaja of Bikaner.

...

I sincerely thank your Highness for your kind message placing your valuable services at my disposal. No decision has yet been come to with regard to military operations but your application will not be forgotten.

GEORGE R.I.

APPENDIX XIX

Extract from a telegram dated 4.8.1914 from Lord Hardinge Viceroy and Governor-General of India to Maharaja Ganga Singh.

...

I acknowledge with grateful thanks the offer your Highness has made in terms of warm-hearted loyalty. .....
I knew I could count upon you and the other gallant Rathores of Bikaner.

..

APPENDIX XX

LIST SHOWING HONOURS, TITLES, MEDALS ETC. OF MAHARAJA GANGA SINGH

1.	Created Honorary Major	1900
2.	Kaisar-i-Hind Gold Medal (for famine relief work in the State)	1900
3.	China Medal (Invested by George V during the Coronation in England in June 1902)	1901
4.	Created K.C.I.E.	1901
5.	Coronation Medal	1902
6.	Created K.C.S.I.	1904
7.	Created G.C.I.E.	1907
8.	Created Honorary Lieutenant Colonel	1909
9.	Created Honorary Colonel	1910
10.	Created G.C.S.I.	1911
11.	Received Honorary LL.D.from Cambridge University.	1911
12.	Created K.C.B. (Military Division)	1914
13.	1914 Star.	
14.	Received Honorary LL.D. from Edinburgh University.	1917
15.	Created Honorary Major General	1917
16.	Received Freedom of the Cities of London, Edinburgh, Manchestor and Bristol.	1917
17.	General Service Medal	1918
18.	Victory Medal	1918
19.	Grand Cordon of the Nile	1918
20.	Created G.C.V.O.	1919
21.	Received Honorary D.C.L. from Oxford University	..1919
22.	Created G.B.E. (Military Division)	1921
23.	Received Honorary LL.D.from Benaras Hindu University	1927
24.	Created Honorary Lieutenant General	1930
25.	Created Honorary General	1937
26.	1939-45 Star.)	
27.	Africa Star.) Posthumous Awards.	
28.	Indian Service Medal.)	
29.	War Medal.)	

-oOo-

APPENDIX XXI

Extract from speech delivered by Maharaja Ganga Singh at the Luncheon given by the Empire Parliamentary Association (United Kingdom Branch) to the Indian Delegates, in the House of Commons Harcourt Room, on 24th April, 1917.

...

x x x x

"Let me say at the outset that the fact that India has, for the first time, been invited to send her representatives to the Imperial War Cabinet and the Imperial War Conference, has caused widespread gratification as a just but, may I be permitted to add, somewhat overdue recognition of her unflinching loyalty and devotion to her Emperor, of her position within the Empire, and of the services which, as in the past, it has been both her pride and her privilege to have rendered to her Sovereign and the Empire in the greatest crisis which we have had to face. I have not come to England to urge the claims of India. It has been my honour to be selected amongst the representatives from India to give our local experience or views that may help the Empire to bring the war to a successful and glorious conclusion. I beg you to believe that the first consideration at the present moment in India of all concerned is to devote all their energies and all their resources to the war." .....

" ..... our aspiration is also to see our country under the guidance of Britain -and, as Mr. Chamberlain said, with the help of Great Britain - making material advance on constitutional lines in regard to matters political and economical, and ultimately to attain, under the standard of our King Emperor, that freedom and autonomy which you in this country secured long ago for yourselves, and which our more fortunate sister Dominions have also enjoyed for some time past."

x x x x x x x x x

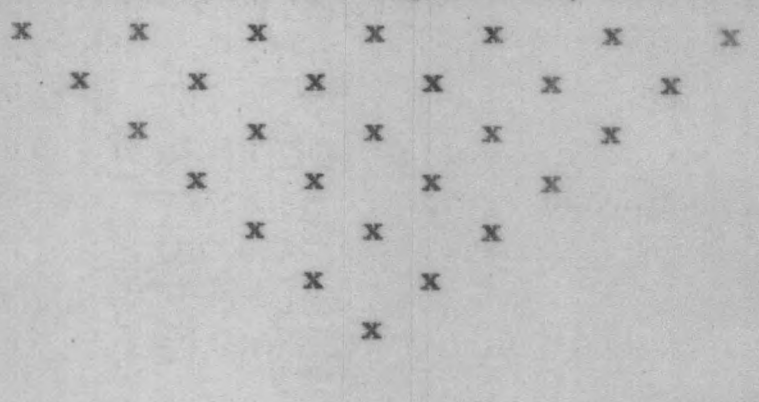
"My Lords and Gentlemen, is it any matter for surprise that India should be aiming at her political regeneration? You have given education on Western lines to Indians and after centuries of close and intimate connections with Great Britain - the land of liberal traditions and popular institutions -we Indians would

be foolish if we did not see much that was good in your political life in this country. And we would be still more foolish if, after grasping the good points of your national life, we did not desire to have grafted or assimilated all that was good in your institutions and system, wherever and whenever our conditions permitted it.

Regarding India's desire for ultimate self-government and autonomy within the British Empire, I am prepared to admit that it presents a difficult problem. But is the difficulty such as to be insoluble by British statesmanship and British good will and sympathy, or are the existing conditions in India so hopelessly irreconcilable with Indian aspirations as to render the question merely academic, not worth serious thought, but fit to be relegated into the background, only to be brought out in a dim and distant future? Certainly there is diversity of race. But does not even the United Kingdom consist of three different races? And is not Canada inhabited by, at least, as great a diversity of races and nationalities? And what about South Africa? And when talking of different races and customs as existing in India, we must bear in mind that India is not a country but really a vast continent; it is not a State but an empire within the Empire."

" .... The unrest that exists is of two kinds, that which the seditionists attempt to spread, happily with small response, has to be faced and is being faced and suitably tackled by the authorities. And it is our earnest hope in India that we may gradually be in a favourable position to eradicate it. It is a cancerous growth not peculiar only to my country. The other kind of unrest is what, if I mistake not, was so aptly described by a British statesman a few years ago as legitimate unrest. It originates from impatience at the rate, and the nature of the political progress made in India.It is in the minds of people who, rightly or wrongly, hold these opinions but who certainly are as loyal as you and I are." ....." And it is further the considered opinion of many who have given the subject a thought, that if the people

of India were given a greater voice and power in directions in which they have shown their fitness, we should hear much less of unrest, agitation and irresponsible criticism .... To you we look for sympathy and help, readiness to recognize the changes which are taking place in India and to help Indians to achieve that further progress and in due time to realize her cherished aspirations." ....." There may be differences as to the nature of India's demands, but there can be no difference as to their being perfectly reasonable and legitimate; ....."



APPENDIX XXII

Extract from an Interview to the Times, dated 10.5.1917 by Maharaja Ganga Singh.

...

It will have been noted as most encouraging to the cause of progress and as a striking proof of the reality of the "new angle of vision" of which we have heard so much that the Times of May 2 observed that British policy looks steadily forward to a gradual increase of the self-governing function for India; but that this policy is too seldom expressed in terms, and that the moment to declare it with authority is now, while the war is still in progress, and not as a reply to agitation when the war is over.

In endorsing these remarks, I would say that the advances to be made should be conceived with the breadth and generosity of view that has marked British policy in so many other parts of the world, and which, so far as I can recall the history of her colonial expansion, she has never had occasion to repent. Sentiment counts for a very great deal in India, and the changes made should be of a character to strike the imagination. The old saying that he gives twice who gives quickly applies with siggular felicity to the constitutional reforms recently stated by the Viceroy to have been submitted by the Government of India to the Secretary of State for consideration. Excessive caution would be an error almost as great as the acceptance of rash and ill-considered proposals. Some further steps in the internal political evolution of India would seem to be not merely a desirable but an essential corollary of the momentous decision that India, with the self-governing dominions, is to be regularly consulted, in peace as in war, at the Imperial Conferences and Cabinets which Lord Curzon has announced it is proposed annually to convene. I do not wish to minimize the immense difficulties ahead in the adaptation of Indian internal affairs to the changes conditions, but they are not insoluble, and should not deter British and Indian statesmen from marching

along the road of ordered development.

There can be no more mistaken view than that the Indian Princes will look with disfavour or apprehension upon these political developments. On the contrary, they will rejoice to see India politically progressing on constitutional lines under the British flag. Whilst every State has preferred to be free to conduct its internal affairs in ways best suited to local circumstances, peculiarities, traditions, and sentiments, and whilst they have different ideals and different standards of administrative efficiency, many of them are making rapid progress in the association of the people in the work of administration and legislation.

In my own territories we inaugurated some years ago the beginnings of a representative assembly. It now consists of elected, as well as of nominated, non-official members, and their legislative powers follow the lines of those laid down for the legislatures of British India in the 1909 reforms. In respect to the Budget they have the same powers as those conferred on the supreme and provincial legislatures in British India by the Lansdowne reforms in force from 1893 to 1909. When announcing my intention of creating this representative body I intimated that as the people showed their fitness they would be entrusted with more powers. Accordingly, at the end of the first triennial term, when the elections will take place, we are revising the rules of business in the direction of greater liberality and of removing unnecessary restrictions.

x x x x

x x x

x x

x

APPENDIX XXIII

Copy of Telegram dated the 15th November, 1918 from Lord Chelmsford to Maharaja Ganga Singh.

...

As a result of communications between myself and London I am now in a position to ask Your Highness to proceed to England at once. It is absolutely essential that Your Highness should secure accommodation on the Chindwara, sailing on 23rd instant from Bombay. Sinha leaves by Chindwara. That boat and special arrangements for accelerated transit in later stages of journey will be provided. Your Highness will be gratified to learn that Prime Minister himself expressed a wish that you should go to London now. Precise method in which Your Highness' services will be asked has not as yet been defined but I know Your Highness will understand the impossibility of getting matters clearly cut at the present juncture in the present stress. Please accept my warmest congratulations and my very best wishes. Please acknowledge by telegram receipt of this message. If it is in any way possible for Your Highness to come to Delhi before starting I should of course be delighted. Political Secretary would give any assistance possible in regard to passage.

x x x

APPENDIX XXIV

Copy of telegram from Mr. Montagu to Maharaja Ganga Singh.

....

I am a little disturbed on reading League of Nations Convention as to India's position and can only find comfort in the fact that you who were good enough to charge yourself personally with watching this matter have not communicated to me any anxiety. Would you see Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Hurst and let me know whether India is all right and how its position has been safeguarded? Please telegraph in cipher for if there is any anxiety I must see Prime Minister before I return on Wednesday.

x x x x

APPENDIX XXV

Extract from Note on Chapter X (relating to the Indian States) of the Joint Report by the Viceroy and the Secretary of State for India.

.....

x x x x x

x x x x

19. The second point that I would like to put forward for the favourable consideration of His Excellency the Viceroy and my brother princes is in regard to the Rulers coming under the second category.

20. Though their powers and status are not on a par with those of the bigger rulers, the fact cannot be overlooked that their territories lie all the same within that one-third of India which at present is known as the Indian States. These rulers are not British subjects and their territories undeniably do not comprise British India proper. Such rulers and their subjects are clearly on a different footing from the magnates and the people of British India respectively. They cannot benefit by any of the Reforms now under contemplation or that may in future be introduced in British India. When it has been found necessary to revise and overhaul the machinery regulating the relations between the British Government and the bigger princes and States which has been in operation now on more or less identical lines for over a hundred years, a similar necessity must, I submit, also be admitted in regard to these lesser rulers and their territories. If they are excluded altogether, under the proposed division, from any benefits whatsoever in which their more important and more fortunate brethren are hoping to participate, they will soon be felt to be the weak links in an otherwise perfectly strong chain and moreover find themselves in a position of stagnation. I fully realise the difference between the two classes of rulers but what I would venture to urge with due respect and all the emphasis at my command, is that some method should be devised by which they too may be brought within the scope of these Reforms and they may feel that the interests of themselves and their

States are not being ignored both by the Paramount Power as well as by their more distinguished brethren.

x x x
x x
x

....

APPENDIX XXVI

Extract from a letter dated 17.7.1939 from Maharaja Ganga Singh to Lord Linlithgow.

...

x x x
x x
x

17. I desire, however, to reaffirm the faith that is in me that the ordered political progress of India, which the princes no less than the people of British India are anxious to achieve can only be obtained through a suitable form of federation. It is also my earnest hope that the problem of India's political advancement may yet be settled in a way satisfactory to all interests, and with suitable and adequate safeguards for the sovereignty, autonomy and Treaty Rights of States.

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x x
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APPENDIX XXVII

Copy of a Strictly Confidential letter No.201-P.54-37, dated the 21st February, 1937 from Maharaja Ganga Singh to Sir M. D.M.Field, the then Chief Minister of the Jodhpur State.

....

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x x x x x

x x x x

..... I intend to explain through this communication of mine, the views I have so often held regarding one of the most bitter and hostile fire brands, the Indian Princes had ever to face on the thresh-hold of public opinion. It had been rather unfortunate that there existed a tremendous amount of intolerance in our public life and as such it has never been possible for Mr. Jainarain Vyas to believe that his opponents can be as sincere and patriotic as he himself is. Very few politicians will believe if I were to tell them that I have all along been holding about Vyas Jai Narain a conspicuously high opinion despite the sensational, indiscriminate and malicious campaign of whole-sale and sweeping attacks so ruthlessly launched by him and his associates against the Princely Order in general and myself in particular. They have at times indulged even in gross exaggeration, discrimination of falsehood, deliberate distortion of facts, vituperation and vulgar abuse, branding thePrinces as imbeciles, tyrants, traitors and oppressors and 'Suckers of the very life blood of their people', and as dishonest and unscrupulous miscreants worse than criminals, guilty of every offence under the sun. Anyone inwardly acquainted with the States and having at heart their good will not believe even a word of this organised, vehement, spiteful and bitter propaganda to be true. But they, who should like to see a united and greater India marching hand in hand on the road of progress towards their respective goals, cannot help realising the future of those who in a way dominate these days the political and public life of these areas.

Let me tell you, Sir Donald, that neither the glorified pillars of the Princely Order nor the loftiest among the Regency Bucks are going to survive these proletarian fire-brands, yet the mantle of centuries old Sovereignty in India is going to fall upon them and even some of us will, in all probability, look towards them for justice and fair play. The terrors of mob misrule under Soviet Russia have been an eye-opener to the whole world and I am sure you will not like them to be repeated in the Indian States. This is possible only when there exists in the Indian States a healthy public opinion backed up by bonafide patriotic and sober minded citizens proceeding along peaceful paths with sincere and laudable object of securing the political advance of those fellow subjects and framing their demands on constitutional and rational lines for the redress of genuine grievances and for the legitimate aspirations to share in the responsibility of administration.

The Indian States, as you yourself know, have produced mostly self-styled leaders or disgruntled and disaffected so-called politicians not infrequently leading the lives of political exiles, or at times men who have been departed from their States, or even convicted of grave offences and who are inspired chiefly, if not entirely, by motives of vindictiveness against the princes and States -Vyas Jai Narain is, no doubt, as bitter and merciless a critic of the Princely Order but, despite that, he is thoroughly honest, incorruptible and true to his conscience and political creed,amidst tens and thousands of cheats, bad characters and dishonest hirelings who profess themselves as politicians, shashtris and misguide the millions of God, inhabitating the Indian States, you shall rarely come across a noble soul who, despite his inborn hatred against the Princes and fiery temperament may atleast be honest and reliable enough to administer the area now constituting the Indian States, properly and thus deliver the goods. I hope you will agree with me that the administration of the Princely States now being looked after by us will ultimately

pass over to our enemies and it is our duty to see that the nobler elements of the hostile campe survive and remain strong enough to dominate the political arena after we retire. Vyas Jai Narain is the only man who can weild an elevating influence over thousands of his colleagues and associates who, left to themselves, will build their thrones upon the ruin of all classes in Rajputana. He may or may not agree with us but he has certainly got that sense of responsibility which alone can inspire a politician to be just to those who have been placed under his charge. Since neither you nor your other colleagues think of throwing the State of Marwar to wolves, you will surely realise that persons of Vyas Jai Narain's eminence will be required too badly to look after the millions at large at a time when you will be no more at the helm of affairs. It is on the score of these arguments that I request you to listen to me and try your level best to be fair to your worst enemy not for his sake or the sake of his associates but certainly for the peace and tranquility of the areas administered by you today.

Vyas Jai Narain, as you yourself know, belongs to a very unresourceful family and as such stands invariably on dire need of financial help. Unlike his associates and colleagues, he does not believe either in black-mailing or illegal gratification. His misfortune has mostly been that his best friends often betray the trust reposed by him in them and he, like an untutored simpleton takes all these betrayals as accomplished facts.

x x x x x

Being too bitter and at the same time true to his conscience or creed, he refuses to learn the tricks of the trade regarding political somnolence. He has, therefore, suffered at the hands of those who profess themselves to be his friends and a handful of betrayals have forced him to close down his 'Akhand Bharat' and think of joining the Cinema most probably as an author or even as actor, since I am told, he is a very good dancer and musician.

My heart bleeds when I think of Jai Narain Vyas getting out of politics and joining the cinema. Inspite of the fact that he has been my worst enemy, he is being considered by me as a noble soul -one who by his relentless efforts will bring one day peace and prosperity to these arid zones of Rajputana. We may, perhaps, be happy over his downfall today, but that day is fast approaching when we will realize that he alone could fill the vacuum created by our retirement.

I had at my own initiative requested a Rai Sahib of Phalodi who happens to be a common friend to approach Vyas Jai Narain and dissuade him from joining the cinema. The idea of this self-made man throwing himself out of sheer helplessness in the arms of film financiers is simply revolting to me. I even offered financial help which he boldly refused and as such I have no other alternative with me than to think of approaching you for making it possible for him to come back to Jodhpur and settle down for his future activities. It would be quite in the fitness of things, if he is allowed to stay at Jodhpur and even associate himself with the administrative problem.

A word of explanation is perhaps necessary to clarify my stand. I want that a self-made man, honest and true to his conscience, should at any rate be helped to keep himself in close touch with Rajputana so that he may be able to deliver the goods in case of an emergent contingency. I wish I could catch hold of Vyas Jai Narain and sit together with him all alone on the rolling sand dunes of Rajputana and have a heart to heart talk with him regarding the unheard of abuse he has so often hurled upon me through the press and the platform. We may agree to disagree or even disagree to agree but, though standing on the parting of waves drifting towards opposite directions, we shall any how realise that despite our mental illusions, and fierce misgivings we both in our own way aim at realising the social good and promoting the welfare of the millions at large. It is true that we go to represent different types of interests but there is no reason to believe that, if interests clash, one set of interests is to be swept away.

I, therefore, approach you with the suggestions that a lenient view should be taken of Vyas Jai Narain's activities specially when he is so unhappy on account of his financial difficulties and he should also be allowed to come to Jodhpur and share the administrative responsibility. Being the representative of a democratic country in India, you should always be proud of your enemies and never allow them to commit suicide, even if they so desire. I say he will prove as an asset and you will never be sorry for having supported your adversary because you know that he is going to survive you and also destined to play a more important role in politics.

....

APPENDIX XXVIII

Extract from the representation on the Sutlej Canals Project No: 330 of 1916, dated 2.2.1916 from the Political Member of the State Council, Bikaner to the Resident Western Rajputana States, Jodhpur.

....

10. The Representations of the Bahawalpur Durbar of 1914 and 1915 are undoubtedly of considerable length, but it appears to this Durbar that, when all is said and done, all the arguments brought forward to exclude completely and for ever Bikaner from participation in the Sutlej Canal scheme, which is after all the real aim and object of the representations, may be brought under the following four heads:-

1) It would be opposed to the riparian law which relates to proprietors in England and America.
2) The Punjab Government schemes are wasteful and founded on wrong deductions.
3) A large area in Bahawalpur which is classed as unfit for irrigation by the Punjab Engineers is really irrigable.
4) That therefore the headworks should be taken still lower down the river so as to exclude Bikaner, the above mentioned area in Bahawalpur taking all the surplus water of the river.

11. With regard to the first argument, it may be noticed that the Bahawalpur Durbar, though constantly referring to it, have refrained from any real discussion of the point, and in this they were wise, for the contention is really valueless, and is founded on no solid basis of fact. After all, we are dealing with India, and not with England or America, and it is not enough to quote passages from textbooks on English law without any attempt to apply them to former or existing practice in India. Necessary premises to the conclusion which the Bahawalpur Durbar wish to be drawn from these quotations are, firstly that such a law is in force for riparian proprietors in India, and secondly that this riparian law for proprietors would also govern cases of large rivers and irrigation projects, and of disputes between States either in England and America, or

in this country. No instance has been quoted in which the English riparian law relating to proprietors has been applied in India, and all the known custom and practice of the country would be totally opposed to any such ruling. Taking the case of ordinary small proprietors in the Punjab - Is the right of irrigation from the small hill streams confined to those proprietors whose lands adjoin the bed of the stream? Have not the non-riparian proprietors exercised from time immemorial equal rights of irrigation with the riparian proprietors? One more case, that of the Shahpur Private Canals in the Punjab, may be quoted. These Canals have been taken from the Jhelum river, and their different proprietors, with perhaps one or two exceptions, own no land on the banks of that river; yet the right of these non-riparian proprietors to sell the water of the river for irrigation purposes to other proprietors has never been questioned, and it is understood that the British Government has accepted the principle that compensation would be due to them for any damage to that right.

If the English riparian law of proprietors were applied to the large rivers of this country, there would not be a single Government irrigation project which could not be successfully objected to, since the riparian proprietors could, on the score of loss to themselves, always refuse to allow the water to be drawn off into the uplands and there sold to persons who have no claim over the river; a strict application of the law would have meant that there could not have been any Punjab Canal Colonies. If this law does not apply to riparian proprietors in this country, how can it be argued that it should apply to riparian States, who presumably are to be understood to stand in the legal position of single proprietors? No such claim was made when the British Government allowed water from the Sirhind Canal of this same Sutlej river to the Phulkian States and to Faridkote who are also non-riparian States.

From the time of Ferozshah a small portion of the North-east corner of Bikaner has been irrigated from the Western

Jumna Canal, and, though the area irrigated is now almost negligible, being only 460 acres, the idea that Bikaner as a non-riparian State should be debarred from the use of any water has never before been heard. The non-riparian State of Jind was also given water from the Western Jumna Canal by the Mogul Emperors. There is in fact nothing approaching to English riparian law in India, and in fact it appears from para 43(xi)(b)&(c) of Bahawalpur Representation of 1915 that the Bahawalpur Durbar are prepared to admit that no such law has ever been applied or heard of before in this country; they apparently however are prepared to contend that Indian States are not to be held to be governed by Indian customs or law, but only by any law in force in England or elsewhere, to which it may be convenient for them to make appeal. To such a contention no answer is required.

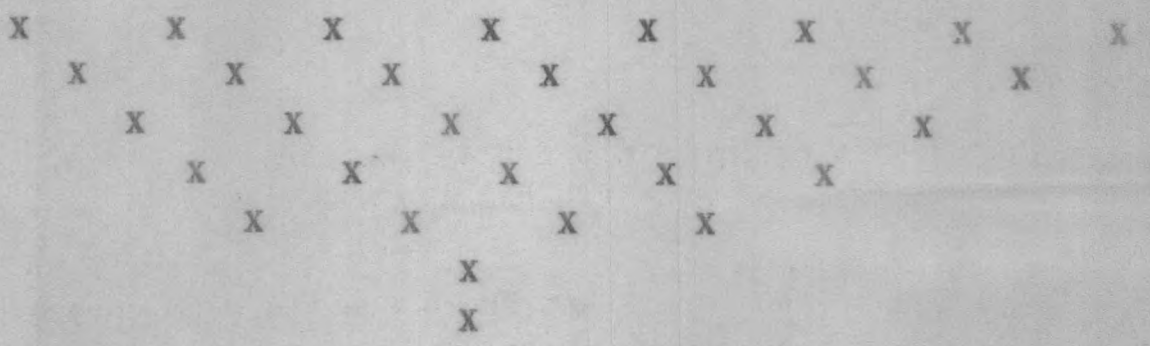
12. In India from time immemorial the Paramount Power has always been the overlord of all the waters of the Indian rivers, and the British Empire as Suzerain of India is in duty bound to make use of those waters in the manner most beneficial to the interests of India, and to the best advantage of varying interests. The position of the British Government has been correctly defined in the preamble to the Northern India Canal and Drainage Act VIII of 1873 which reads as follows:-

> "Whereas, throughout the territories to which this Act extends, the Government is entitled to use and control for public purposes the water of all rivers and streams flowing in natural channels, and of all lakes and other natural collections of still waters; and whereas it is expedient to amend the law relating to irrigation, navigation, and drainage in the said territories &c."

Section 5 of the Act gives power to the Local Government to arrange by Notification to use the said waters.

This is the law of the land. In addition to this law, there is the ancient custom of the country known as 'sarobapaina' which entitles the upper riparian to make any use of the waters of any stream. It is this ancient custom, in addition to the established responsibilities and duties of Paramount Power, which

entitled the British Government to make the law. The Durbar readily and freely agree that Bahawalpur is entitled to full consideration in any allotment of the Sutlej waters, but, while conceding so much, cannot admit for a moment that the Bahawalpur Durbar have any right whatever either to prevent the Suzerain Power from giving those waters where they are most needed, or to exclude Bikaner for ever from the benefits of irrigation.



APPENDIX XXIX

63 Bally Gunge Circular Road,
Calcutta.

25th February, 1912.

My dear Maharaja Sahib,

It is really awfully good of you to write to me a second time before I had replied to your first letter. But the fact is that since the beginning of this month, my health has been causing considerable anxiety to my Doctor and a fortnight ago he was thinking of ordering me to stop all work at once and proceed immediately to the South of France for treatment. For the last fourteen years I have been a sufferer from diabetes, and the complaint, which hitherto has been a comparatively mild one, suddenly threatened this month to assume a more serious turn. However I am now better and am steadily improving. Only the Doctor has put me on very strict diet with very regular hours and has limited my work, including correspondence, to a maximum of six hours a day - a limit that is soon reached. I hope therefore that Your Highness will forgive me for the delay that has occurred in my writing to you.

Many thanks for the copies of the replies of the Princes and Chiefs to your circular letter and telegrams and of the communications addressed by Your Highness to the Viceroy, which you have kindly sent me. I agree with you that the movement was an unqualified success, and I think we have reason to feel satisfied that we did a good day's work for our countryin inaugurating it. May I keep these copies with me as a memento of our cooperation in this matter?

I recall with pleasure and gratitude the desire more than once expressed by you, while you were here, that I should get closer to the Viceroy so that H.E. might be enabled to know me better. An incident has recently occurred driving things in that direction and I mention it in this letter because I feel that Your Highness will like to know it. The Viceroy's announcement to a Mahomedan deputation at Dacca that the

Government of India had decided to recommend to the Secretary of State the creation of separate University at Dacca caused great excitement in the city. It was not so much the idea of a separate university as the mystery in which the whole thing appeared to be shrouded- the newspapers first stated that the interview of the deputation was a confidential one - which caused alarm in the Hindu community here as it gave to the affair the appearance of a deal between the Government and the Mahomedans. At once a strong protest rose on every side against what the Viceroy had done, and the Anglo-Indian community of this place, which is full of resentment against the Viceroy both for the reversal of the Capital to Delhi immediately began to take advantage of the situation by making overtures to the Hindu community for a joint protest against the high-handedness of the Viceroy, and for a representation to the Secretary of State that he should be recalled! The game had nearly succeeded, for the Indian leaders here took in hand arrangements for a big demonstration against the Viceroy to be held in the Town Hall on 24th February, i.e. yesterday, and this was to be followed by a public meeting of all classes protesting against the Viceroy's autocracy. Things looked very dark when Sir Lawrence Jenkins and I met to seriously discuss the situation, with the object of finding out if a way could not be thought of out of the difficulty. At the end of our talk, Sir Lawrence pressed me strongly to ask for an interview with the Viceroy and put everything, that we thought he should know, before him. But this I declined to do, being restrained by the same feeling which I had expressed to Your Highness when you were here. I, however, undertook to see D N Bonlay whom I knew in Bombay and also Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, who has a warm feeling of personal friendship for me. In accordance with this, I saw D N Bonlay in his office and strongly urged on him the impolicy of announcing ~~the~~ important decisions without giving the people affected a chance of expressing their views. I also told him how excited the Bengalees were over the Dacca affair and how an alliance between them and the Anglo-Indian community against the Viceroy was about to be formed,

which would mean a storm against the Viceroy the like of which had not been seen since Lord Ripon's time. D N Bonlay listened to me in absolute silence for about ten minutes and then abruptly got up and asking me to excuse him for ~~a~~ half a minute went into the room of the Viceroy. When he returned, he said to me to my great surprise:- Mr. Gokhale, will you go and repeat to the fountain-head all that you have been saying to me? I have no answer to give you, for I agree with you. I think he is going too fast.' Well, after this there was nothing for me to do but to go into the Viceroy's room and lay the whole matter before H.E. He was very nice to me and we had a good half hour's talk in the course of which he told me freely what was at the back of his mind in wanting to create this new university and I mentioned to him all the objections against the procedure adopted. Finally I urged him to make a clear and conciliatory pronouncement immediately on the subject. He said it was his intention to make such a pronouncement on 16th March when the Convocation of the Calcutta University would be held. I pointed out to him that that would be too late, as the mischief would then be beyond recall, and I asked him if he would receive a deputation on the subject, if one was arranged. He at once welcomed the idea and said that he would be very glad if an opportunity was thus provided for him to remove misapprehensions. Finally he talked over with me what he would say to the deputation if one waited on him and then more than once said that he 'deeply appreciated my thoughtful intervention' and was very grateful for it. Later on he expressed himself in similar terms to Sir Guy Wilson about my intervention. That same evening I saw some of the Bengalee leaders and a deputation was at once arranged and Your Highness might have seen the proceedings in the papers. Since then the situation has much improved, and though there is still considerable soreness in some Bengalee quarters, the personal feeling against the Viceroy has almost wholly disappeared so far as the Hindu community is concerned.

I have narrated the incident in some detail because I feel Your Highness will like to know all this. My principal object in moving in the matter was to prevent our Indian public from committing a serious mistake and turning the Viceroy more or less against us. The interview with the Viceroy was wholly unpremeditated, but I am glad now that it took place.

Trusting that Your Highness is quite well and with warm regards,

Yours very sincerely,

G.K.Gokhale.

P.S.

Will you kindly ask the gentleman whom you address as 'K.P.' (I am sorry I have forgotten his name) to return to me my copy of the India list, which I had given him here? I am sorry to trouble Your Highness in such a small matter, but I want the book for some references in connection with the forthcoming financial debates and I cannot procure a copy anywhere here, though I have tried my best to do so.

APPENDIX XXX

Copy of letter dated the 9th July, 1931 from Maharaja Ganga Singh Lallgarh Palace, Bikaner, to Mahatma Gandhi, Mani Bhuwan, Laburnam Road, Bombay.

Thanks for your letter of the 7th instant. There has been no misunderstanding on my part so far as what you told me is concerned, when I had the pleasure of seeing you at my House in Bombay on the 10th June. I quite realised that it was not possible for you to decide with any certainty as to your going to England, and that, in the circumstances, you could not definitely avail yourself of my offer to transfer and place one of the spare cabins, I had provisionally secured, at your disposal.

At the same time, you will recollect that, whilst venturing to urge most strongly upon you the necessity, in the interests of our Country, of the Congress being represented and of your being present at the Round Table Conference and the Federal Structure Committee, I had impressed upon you the necessity of provisionally securing passages for yourself and your party, as otherwise there would be great difficulty, with the great rush on passages, in securing berths, and all the more so as the Mooltan is an Australian boat.

Whilst realising that it would be premature definitely to book any passages, I offered, as you will recall, to place one of the spare cabins I had at your disposal, and to see what arrangements could be made ~~and~~ for your kitchen; and it was in pursuance of that promise made by me to you that I made such provisional arrangements and wrote to you.

May I therefore assure you there was no trouble really involved; and I was only too glad to do what I could for one whom I hope I shall now be enabled to have the privilege of calling my personal friend.

My only fear is that you will experience difficulties in securing passages at a later date; and I am still more sorry to

APPENDIX XXXI

Copy of a private letter dated 4.7.1931 from Maharaja Ganga Singh, 38, Nepean Sea Road, Bombay to Mahatma Gandhi.

...

You will remember that on the 10th June, when I had the pleasure of a long heart to heart talk with you - which I much enjoyed - you jokingly referred to me as a general purveyor of steamer passages to friends. I am afraid however that, through my having been prevented from writing to you earlier on account of very heavy work, and having also to go to Mount Abu to see my grand-children - one of whom has been ill - you may think that I had forgotten all about my promise to secure passage by the P.&.O. Steamer Mooltan for yourself, and also to help in making arrangement for your kitchen.

That very evening I gave orders to the Master of my Household, who went and saw the P.&.O., and our Agents, Messrs. X Cox & Kings (Agents), Hornby Road, Bombay, with the result that one First Class Double Berth Cabin No:349/50 on Deck A of the Mooltan sailing on the 15th August has been booked. Special arrangements also have similarly been made for your meals to be prepared separately by reserving a place on the after well Deck, which will be shown to your cook before sailing, and where an oil stove could, if you desire, be provided.

May I remind you to secure any extra accommodation for your Secretaries and servants that you require? I have a recollection that I impressed the necessity of urgent action in this matter in view of the great demand on passages by the Mooltan; and mention this to remind you, and to express the hope that you have done so already, or, failing that, that you will now write to the Agents, or direct to the P.&.O. who also require for their lists &c. as usual, the names of your party.

Above all, I do hope so much- as I know do H.H. of Bhopal and some of the British Indian friends whom I met here recently - that you will be able to travel on the Mooltan, where we can get through so much business in the way of preparing ourselves for

the work that lies ahead of us in the Federal Structure Committee and the Round Table Conference.

I enclose a copy of the plan of the ship for ready reference; and, as I am leaving tonight for Bikaner, would suggest your now getting in touch direct with the Agents or the P.&.O.; otherwise I should have been only too pleased to be of any further help to you.

Hoping you are well, and in great haste,

Yours sincerely,

Ganga Singh.

APPENDIX XXXII

List showing honours, titles, and medals of Maharaja Sadul Singhji.

..

1.	Created Honorary Lieutenant Colonel	 1943
2.	Created Honorary Major General	 1945
3.	1939-45 Star	 1945
4.	Burma Star	 1945
5.	Defence Medal	 1945
6.	War Medal	 1945
7.	Associate Knight of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem	 1945
8.	Created G.C.I.E.	 1946
9.	Created Lieutenant General	 1946
10.	Created G.C.S.I.	 1946

-oOo-

APPENDIX XXXIII

List showing the names of a few of the officers of the former Bikaner State who, on the formation of the Union of Rajasthan, were placed as heads of departments or similar senior posts.

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1. Mr. K.M.Panikkar, Prime Minister Bikaner, later became Ambassador to China.

2. Kanwar Jaswant Singh of Daudsar, Prime Minister of Bikaner, later became the leader of the Opposition in the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha.

3. Mr. C.L.Kapoor, Manager, Bikaner State Railway, became the General Manager, Railways, Rajasthan.

4. Dr. S.K. Menon, Principal Medical Officer, Bikaner, became the Principal Medical Officer and the Principal, Medical College, Jaipur.

5. Major-General Jaideo Singh, General Officer Commanding, Bikaner State Forces, became the senior-most Army officer under the Rajpramukh who also was the Commander-in-Chief Rajasthan States Forces.

6. Shri Kanahya Lal Sanghi, Finance Secretary, Bikaner, became the Finance Secretary, Rajasthan Government.

7. Mr. M.U.Menon, Private Secretary to Maharaja Sadul Singh became the Integration Secretary to the Rajasthan Government.

8. Lala Kamta Prasad, Secretary Civil Supplies, Bikaner, became Director of Rehabilitation, Government of Rajasthan.

-oOo-

APPENDIX XXXIV

Copy of letter dated 18.6.1947 from Maharaja Sadul Singh, Bikaner House, Abu, to Mahatma Gandhi, Bhangi Colony, New Delhi.

...

I learn from the papers that you are shortly going to visit Kashmir. I sincerely hope that with your usual tact and far-sightedness you will be able to bring about a satisfactory understanding between the Kashmir Government and the political parties concerned in the State and thus ease the situation and solve the political deadlock there.

It would be presumptuous on my part to make a suggestion to one like yourself with all the experience of the world that you have. But as one who is a great well-wisher of His Highness the Maharaja of Kashmir, whom I have known for many years and towards whom I entertain feelings of genuine regard and affection, I have also naturally been giving serious thought to the question. Apart from that my feelings of patriotism to our mother country also lead me to suggest that a serious effort be made to solve this deadlock.

One possible way in which a solution might be reached has struck me which I place before you for consideration for whatever it may be worth. I do not know the real state of affairs in Kashmir, but judging from what I have been able to gather from various unofficial sources it seems to me that it is possible that Sheikh Abdulla may not wish either to apologise for or go back upon the "Quit Kashmir" cry and propaganda which he started. Acharya Kirpalani and other responsible leaders have publicly advised the Kashmir people and the National Conference workers to give up the "Quit Kashmir" slogan and work for responsible government under the aegis of the Maharaja of Kashmir. Sheikh Abdulla is also reported to have stated "before the Sessions Judge during his trial that the 'Quit Kashmir' demand was not directed against the person of the Maharaja." In the circumstances if he can retract from the position that he had originally taken up, all the better; otherwise a possible means of compromise would be that both sides should agree to let bygones be bygones and not reopen what has happened in the

past, but let Sheikh Abdulla give an undertaking that in the future he would not have anything to do with the "Quit Kashmir" agitation and also give whatever reasonable assurances that may be required in regard to his being loyal and owing allegiance to the Maharaja of Kashmir and the Ruling Dynasty. This may perhaps enable the Kashmir State authorities, to release Sheikh Abdulla and other political prisoners and a new Chapter can be opened.

The exigencies of the times and the particular situation obtaining in Kashmir at the present moment demand that an understanding and compromise be brought about in Kashmir without further loss of time and I have no doubt that with your good offices a solution would be possible if both the sides approach the problem with a real desire to come to an amicable settlement.

I should however like to make it clear that I have not had an opportunity of discussing the matter with either His Highness of Kashmir or his Prime Minister and thus I do not know what the reasons are for the present policy adopted by the Kashmir Government; nor am I writing and making this suggestion at the instance of His Highness or his Government. But since you are likely to deal with this matter during your forthcoming visit to Kashmir I am writing to let you know my views and a possible line of compromise which has struck me in the greater interests of our mother country as well as the Kashmir State.

We are now happily working hand in hand and with one common purpose. Our interests are identical and, above all, you and my brethren in the rest of India, myself and my beloved people -in whose service I have dedicated my whole life as long as it pleases the Almighty -spring from the same stock and are all Indians.

With expressions of the highest regard and deep respect and admiration which I have always entertained for you and your lofty ideals,

.....

APPENDIX XXXV

Extract from Maharaja Sadul Singh's Press Statement dated 8.7.1947.

.....

..... I should like to take the earliest opportunity of congratulating him most sincerely on this statesman-like enunciation of the policy of the new States Department under him and that of the Congress.

I find myself whole-heartedly in agreement with what he says and if I may say so a more appropriately worded statement breathing genuine friendliness and goodwill towards the States could hardly have been made at this momentous juncture when our mother country is advancing towards her independence and when the State's relationship with her is actively on the anvil.

Above all it contains the following assurances to the Princes and their people -

(1) "We ask no more of them than accession on these three subjects in which the common interests of the country are involved. In other matters we would scrupulously respect their autonomous existence;"

(2) "It is not the desire of the Congress to interfere in any manner whatever with the domestic affairs of the States;"

(3) "They are no enemies of the Princely Order but on the other hand wish them and their people under their aegis all prosperity, contentment and happiness;"

(4) "Nor would it be my policy to conduct the relations of the new Department with the States in any manner which savours of the domination of one over the other."

X X X X X X
X X
X

It is gratifying that the majority of the States have now joined the Constituent Assembly and I sincerely trust that Sardar Patel's statement will further lead to other also deciding to join at an early date. I would, therefore, urge my brother princes to grasp the hand of friendship which has thus spontaneously been extended by the Congress and to give their full support and help so that India may be rapidly raised to her "new greatness."

APPENDIX XXXVI

INSTRUMENT OF ACCESSION OF THE BIKANER STATE.

===

WHEREAS THE Indian Independence Act, 1947, provides that as from the fifteenth day of August, 1947, there shall be set up an independent dominion known as 'INDIA' and that the Government of India Act, 1935, shall, with such omissions, additions, adaptations and modification as the Governor-General may by order specify be applicable to the Dominion of India;

AND whereas the Government of India Act, 1935, as so adapted by the Governor-General provides that an Indian State may accede to the Dominion of India by an Instrument of Accession executed by the Ruler thereof

NOW THEREFORE

I, Maharaja Sadul Singh, ruler of the Bikaner State in the exercise of my sovereignty in and over my said State do hereby execute this my Instrument of Accession and

1. I hereby declare that I accede to the Dominion of India with the intent that the Governor-General of India, the Dominion Legislature, the federal Court and any other Dominion authority established for the purposes of the Dominion, shall, by virtue of this my Instrument of Accession, but subject always to the terms thereof, and for the purposes only of the Dominion, exercise in relation to the State of Bikaner (hereinafter referred to as "this State") such functions as may be vested in them by or under the Government of India Act, 1935 as in force in the Dominion of India on the 15th day of August, 1947 (which Act as so in force is hereinafter referred to as "the Act").

2. I hereby assume the obligation of ensuring that due effect is given to the provisions of the Act within this State so far as they are applicable therein by virtue of this my Instrument of Accession.

3. I accept the matters specified in the Schedule hereto as the matters with respect to which the Dominion Legislatures may make laws for this State.

4. I hereby declare that I accede to the Dominion of India on the assurance that if an agreement is made between the Governor-General and the Ruler of this State whereby any function in relation to the administration in this State of any law of the Dominion Legislature shall be

exercised by the Ruler of this State then any such agreement shall be deemed to form part of this Instrument and shall be construed and have effect accordingly.

5. The terms of this my Instrument of Accession shall not be varied by any amendment of the Act or of the Indian Independence Act, 1947 unless such amendment is accepted by me by an instrument supplementary to this Instrument.

6. Nothing in this Instrument shall empower the Dominion legislature to make any law for this State authorising the compulsory acquisition of land for any purpose, but I hereby undertake that should the Dominion for the purposes of a Dominion law which applies in this State, deem it necessary to acquire any land, I will at their request acquire the land at their expense or if the land belongs to me, transfer it to them on such terms as may be agreed, or, in default of agreement, determined by an arbitrator to be appointed by the Chief Justice of India.

7. Nothing in this Instrument shall be deemed to commit ~~the~~ me in any way to acceptance any future constitution of India or to fetter my discretion to enter into agreements with the Government of India under any such future constitution.

8. Nothing in this Instrument affects the continuance of sovereignty in and over this State, or, save as provided by or under this Instrument, the exercise of any powers authority and rights now enjoyed by me as Ruler of this State.

9. I hereby declare that I execute this Instrument on behalf of this State and that any reference in this Instrument to me or to the Ruler of the State is to be construed as including a reference to my heirs and successors.

Given under my hand this the seventh day of August, 1947.

SADUL SINGH
Maharaja of Bikaner.

I do hereby accept this Instrument of Accession.

Dated the 16th day of August, 1947.

Mountbatten of Burma.

Seal-
Government of India,
Ministry of States.

S C H E D U L E

The matters with respect to which the Dominion Legislature may make laws for the State.

A. Defence:

1. The Naval, Military and Airforce of the Dominion and any other armed force raised or maintained by the Dominion, any armed forces including forces raised or maintained by an existing State, which are attached to or operated with, any of the armed forces of the Dominion.
2. Naval, Military and Airforce works, administration of cantonment areas.
3. Arms; fire-arms; ammunition.
4. Explosives.

B. External Affairs:

1. External Affairs; the implementing of Treaties and agreements with other countries; extradition, including the surrender of criminals and accused persons to parts of His Majesty's Dominion outside India.
2. Admission into and emigration and expulsion from India including in relation thereto the regulation of movement in India of persons who are not British subjects domiciled in any existing State on pilgrimage to places beyond India.
3. Naturalisation.

C. Communications:

1. Posts and telegraphs including telephones, wireless, broadcast and other like forms of communications.
2. Federal railways; the regulation of all railways other than minor railways in respect of safety, the maximum and minimum rates and fares, stations and services terminal charges, inter-change of traffic and responsibility of railway administration as carriage of goods and passengers; the regulation of minor railways in respect of safety and the responsibility of the administration of such railways as carriage of goods and passengers.
3. Maritime shipping and navigation, including shipping and navigation on tidal waters; admirality jurisdiction.
4. Port quarantine.
5. Major ports that is to say declaration and delimitations of such ports and stations and stations and power of court authorities therein.

6. Aircraft and air-navigation; the provision of aerodrome regulation and organisation of air traffic and aerodromes.

7. Light-houses including light-ships, beacons and other provisions for the safety of shipping and aircrafts.

8. Carriage of passengers and goods by sea or by air.

9. Extension of powers and jurisdiction of members of police force belonging to any area outside that unit.

D. Ancilliary:

1. Elections to the Dominion legislature subject to the provisions of the Act and of any order made thereunder.

2. Offences against laws with respect to any of the aforesaid matters.

3. Inquiries and statistics for the purpose of any of the aforesaid matters.

4. Jurisdiction and powers of all courts with respect to any of the aforesaid matters but except with the consent of the Ruler of the existing State not so as to confer any jurisdiction or powers upon any courts other than courts ordinarily exercising jurisdiction in or in relation to that State.

....

APPENDIX XXXVII

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE STATE OF BIKANER AND THE DOMINION OF INDIA.

-oOo-

WHEREAS it is to the benefit and advantage of the Dominion of India as well as of the Indian States that existing agreements and administrative arrangements in the matters of common concern should continue for the time being, between the Dominion of India or any part thereof and the Indian States:

Now therefore it is agreed between the Bikaner State and the Dominion of India that :-

1. (1) Until new agreements in this behalf are made of agreements and administrative arrangements as to matters of common concern now existing between the Crown and any Indian State shall, so far as may be appropriate, continue as between the Dominion of India, or, as the case may be, the part thereof, and the State.

(2) In particular, and without derogation from the generality of sub-clause (i) of this clause the matters referred to above shall include the matters specified in the Schedule to this agreement.

2. Any dispute arising out of this agreement, or out of the agreements or arrangements hereby continued shall, unless any provision is made therein for arbitration by an authority other than the Governor-General, or Governor, be settled by arbitration according, as far as may be, to the procedure of the Indian Arbitration Act, 1899.

3. Nothing in this agreement includes the exercise of any paramountcy functions.

K.M.Panikkar,
Prime Minister,
Bikaner State.

Sd/-
Secretary to the Govt of India.

Seal of the Government of India, Ministry of States.

SCHEDULE

1. Air communications.
2. Arms and Equipments.
3. Control of Commodities.
4. Currency & Coinage.
5. Customs.
6. Indian States Forces.
7. External Affairs.
8. Extradition.
9. Import & Export control.
10. Irrigation & Electric power.
11. Motor Vehicles.
12. National Highways.
13. Opium.
14. Posts, telegraphs & Telephones.
15. Railways (including Police and other arrangements relating to taxation)
16. Salt.
17. Central Excises, relief from double income-tax and other arrangements relating to taxation.
18. Wireless.

...

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
NEW DELHI.

18th October 1950.

My esteemed friend,

I have great pleasure in communicating to Your Highness that your succession to the Gaddi of the Bikaner State has been recognised by me, and I take this opportunity to offer Your Highness my hearty congratulations.

I remain, with much consideration,

Yours sincerely,

PRESIDENT OF INDIA.

His Highness Maharajadhiraja
Raj Rajeshwar Shiromani Maharaja
Shri Karni Singhji Bahadur,
Maharaja of Bikaner.

UNIVERSITY OF BIKANER LIBRARY

D.O.no._____

MINISTRY OF STATES
INDIA

New Delhi.
February 18,1949.

My dear Maharaja Sahib,

The Privy Purse amount to be paid by the United State of Rajasthan to Your Highness during your lifetime has been fixed at Rs 1700000 (seventeen lakhs) annually. Your Highness' successors will get Rs 1000000 (ten lakhs) annually.

Yours sincerely,

(N.M.Buch)

Lt.General His Highness Maharajadhiraja
Raj Rajeshwar Shiromani Maharaja Shri
Sir Sadul Singhji Bahadur,GCSI,GCIE,CVO.,
Maharaja of Bikaner.

GENEALOGICAL TREE OF THE HOUSE OF BIKANER

I-Rao Bikaji (founder of Bikaner)
1465-1504

II-Rao Naroji 1504-05 — Gharsiji — III-Rao Lunkaranji 1505-26

Ratansinghji — IV-Rao Jaitsiji 1526-42 — Bersiji

V-Rao Kalyanmalji 1542-71 — Sri Rangji — Bhim Rajji — Bhakarsiji

VI- Raja Raisinghji 1571-1612 — Amarsinghji — Sultansinghji — Pirthirajji — Ramsinghji

VII-Raja Dalpatsinghji 1612-14 — VIII-Raja Sursinghji 1614-31 — Hanwant Singhji — Kishan Singhji

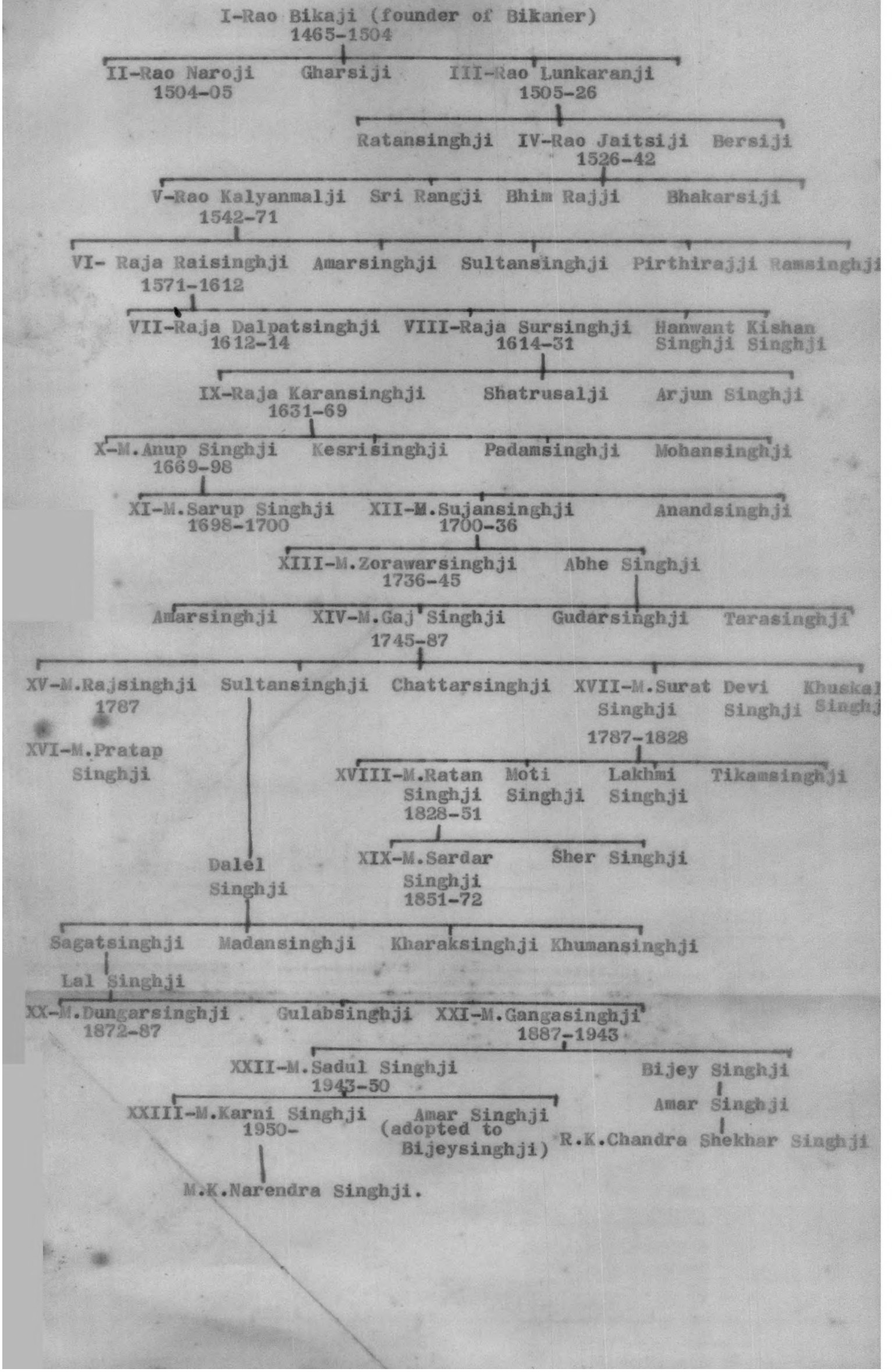
IX-Raja Karansinghji 1631-69 — Shatrusalji — Arjun Singhji

X-M.Anup Singhji 1669-98 — Kesrisinghji — Padamsinghji — Mohansinghji

XI-M.Sarup Singhji 1698-1700 — XII-M.Sujansinghji 1700-36 — Anandsinghji

XIII-M.Zorawarsinghji 1736-45 — Abhe Singhji

GENEALOGICAL TREE OF THE HOUSE OF BIKANER



COMPARATIVE CHART SHOWING THE RULERS OF BIKANER

Sl. No.	BIKANER Name	Year	JODHPUR Name	Year
1.	Rao Bikaji	1465-1504	Rao Jodhaji Rao Satalji, Rao Sujoji	-1491 1491-1516
2.	Rao Naroji	1504-1505	Rao Sujoji	1491-1516
3.	Rao Lunkaranji	1505-1526	Rao Sujoji Rao Gangaji	1491-1516 1516-1532
4.	Rao Jaitsiji	1526-1542	Rao Gangaji Rao Maldeoji	1516-1532 1532-1562
5.	Rao Kalyanmalji	1542-1571	Rao Maldeoji Rao Chandrasenji	1532-1562 1562-1581
6.	Raja Rai Singhji	1571-1612	Rao Chandrasenji Raja Udaisinghji Raja Sursinghji	1562-1581 1581-1595 1595-1620
7.	Raja Dalpat Singhji	1612-1614	Raja Sursinghji	1595-1620
8.	Raja Sur Singhji	1614-1631	Raja Sursinghji Raja Gajsinghji	1595-1620 1620-1638
9.	Raja Karan Singhji	1631-1669	Raja Gajsinghji M.Jaswant Singhji	1620-1638 1638-1707
10.	M.Anup Singhji	1669-1698	M.Jaswant Singhji	1638-1707
11.	M.Sarup Singhji	1698-1700	M.Jaswantsinghji	1638-1707

& THE CONTEMPORARY RULERS OF JODHPUR, JAIPUR AND THE MUGHAL EMPERORS AND BRITISH VICEROYS.

JAIPUR		CENTRAL	
Name	Year	Name	Year.
Prithvi Raj	1502-1527	Sikandar Lodi	1451-1489
		Bahlol Lodi	1489-1517
Prithviraj	1502-1527	Bahlol Lodi	1489-1517
Prithviraj	1502-1527	Bahlol Lodi	1489-1517
		Ibrahim Lodi	1517-1526
Prithviraj	1502-1527	Babar	1526-1530
Pooranmalji	1527-1533	Humayun	1530-1540
M.Bhimsinghji	1533-1536	Sher Shah	1540-1545
M.Ratan Singhji	1536-1547		
66			
M.Ratan Singhji	1536-1547	Sher Shah	1540-1545
M.Askaranji	1547-1547	Salim Shah	1545-1554
M.Bharmalji	1547-1573	Ibrahim	1554-1555
		Sikandar	1554-1555
		Humayun	1555-1556
		Akbar	1556-1605
M.Bharmalji	1547-1573	Akbar	1556-1605
M.Bhagwandassji	1573-1587	Jehangir	1605-1627
M.Man Singhji	1587-1614		
M. Man Singhji	1587-1614	Jehangir	1605-1627
Mirza Raja Bharsinghji	1614-1621	Jehangir	1605-1627
Mirza Raja Jai Singhji	1621-1667	Dawar Baksh	1627
		Shah Jahan	1628-1657
Mirza Raja Jai Singhji	1621-1667	Shah Jahan	1628-1657
Ram Singhji	1667-1687	Aurangzeb	1657-1707
Ram Singhji I	1667-1687	Aurangzeb	1657-1707
Bishan Singhji	1687-1699		
Bishan Singhji	1687-1699	Aurangzeb	1657-1707
Swai Jai Singhji II	1699-1743		

Sl.No.	BIKANER		JODHPUR	
	Name	Year	Name	Year
12.	M.Sujan Singhji	1700-1736	M.Jaswantsinghji M.Ajit Singhji M.Abhey Singhji	1638-1707 1707-1724 1724-1749
13.	M.Zorawar Singhji	1736-1745	M.Abhey Singhji	1724-1749
14.	M.Gaj Singhji	1745-1787	M.Abhey Singhji M.Ramsinghji M.Bhagatsinghji M.Bijaisinghji	1724-1749 1749-1752 1752-1753 1753-1793
15.	M.Raj Singhji	1787	M.Bijaisinghji	1753-1793
16.	M.Pratap Singhji	1787	M.Bijaisinghji	1753-1793
17.	M.Surat Singhji	1787-1828	M.Bijaisinghji M.Bhimsinghji M.Mansinghji	1753-1793 1793-1803 1803-1843
18.	M.Ratan Singhji	1828-1851	M.Mansinghji M.Takhatsinghji	1803-1843 1843-1873

JAIPUR		CENTRE	
Name	Year	Name	Year
S.Jaisinghji II	1699-1743	Aurangzeb	1657-1707
		Azam Shah	1707
		Kam Baksh	1707
		Shah Alam Bahadur Qutubudin	1707-1712
		Azimushan Jahandurah	1712
		Muizuddin	1712
		Farukh Sayar	1713-1719
		Rafi-ul-Darjat	1719
		Shah Jahan II	1719
		Ibrahim	1720
		Mohammed Shah	1719-1748
S.Jaisinghji II	1699-1743	Mohammed Shah	1719-1748
S.Ishari Singhji	1743-1750		
S.Ishari Singhji	1743-1750	Mohammed Shah	1719-1748
M.Madhosinghji I	1750-1767	Ahmed Shah	1748-1754
S.Prithisinghji	1767-1778	Alamgir II	1754-1759
S.Pratapsinghji.	1778-1802	Shali Jahan III	1759
		Shah Alam II Jalaluddin	1759-1806
S.Pratapsinghji	1778-1802	Shah Alam II	1759-1806
S.Pratapsinghji	1778-1802	Shah Alam II	1759-1806
S.Pratapsinghji	1778-1802	Shah Alam II	1759-1806
S.Jagatsinghji	1802-1818	Mohammed Akbar II	1806-1837
S.Jaisinghji III	1818-1835		
		Wellesley	1798-1805
		Minto	1807-1813
		Hastings	1813-1823
		John Adam	1823
		Amherst	1823-1828
S.Jaisinghji III	1818-1835	Mohd. Akbar II	1806-1837
S.Ramsinghji II	1835-1880	Bahadurshah	1837
		William Bentinck	1828-1835
		Metcalfe	1835-1836
		Auckland	1836-1842
		Ellenborough	1842-1844
		Hardinge	1844-1848
		Dalhousie	1848-1856

Sl. No.	BIKANER Name	Year	JODHPUR Name	Year
19.	M.Sardar Singhji	1851-1872	M.Takhat Singhji	1843-1873
20.	M.Dungar Singhji	1872-1887	M.Takhat Singhji M.Jaswant Singhji	1843-1873 1873-1895
21.	M.Ganga Singhji	1887-1943	M.Jaswant Singhji M.Sardar Singhji M.Sumer Singhji M.Umed Singhji	1873-1895 1895-1911 1911-1914 1914-1947
22.	M.Sadul Singhji	1943-1950	M.Umed Singhji M.Hanuwantsinghji	1914-1947 1947-1952

JAIPUR		CENTRE	
Name	Year	Name	Year
S.Ram Singhji II	1835-1880	Bahadur Shah	
		Dalhousie	1848-1856
		Canning	1856-1862
		Elgin	1862-1863
		Lawrence	1864-1869
		Mayo	1869-1872
S.Ram Singhji II	1835-1880	Northbrooke	1872-1876
S.Madho Singhji II	1880-1922	Lytton	1876-1880
		Ripon	1880-1884
		Dufferin	1884-1888
S.Madho Singhji II	1880-1922	Dufferin	1884-1888
S.Man Singhji II	1922-	Lansdown	1888-1894
		Elgin	1894-1899
		Curzon	1899-1905
		Minto II	1905-1910
		Hardinge	1910-1916
		Chelmsford	1916-1921
		Reading	1921-1926
		Irwin	1926-1931
		Willingdon	1931-1936
		Linlithgow	1936-1943
		Wavell	1943-1947
S.Man Singhji II	1922-	Wavell	1943-1947
		Mountbatten	1947

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The vast collection of manuscripts, State papers, and other documents in the custody of the Maharaja of Bikaner and the collections available in the Rajasthan State Archives housed at present at Bikaner, together with their duplicates in the National Archives of India and other State Records offices, constitute the chief original source for the thesis. The famous Anup Sanskrit Library, the personal collection of manuscripts belonging to the Maharaja of Bikaner for the last three hundred years and housed in the Lallgarh Palace, has the oldest and the best transcribed copies of manuscripts not available elsewhere in India. The historical documents preserved in the Rajasthan State Archives, both at its Head-quarters at Bikaner and in the district repositories, constitute a store house of information pertaining to the period covered by the thesis from the reign of emperor Akbar to the present day; and new light is thrown on the relations between the Mughal emperors and the princely States of Rajasthan.

The Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner, contain in their custody mawazna (1704-1948), Nuskha punna (1786-1948), avarjah and Baqiat (1663-1903), Shamlat (1761-1948), adsattas (1662-1815), roznamchas (1663-1903), barat (1735-1813), farmans and nishans (1622-1711), sanads (1638-1765), Akhbarat (1666-1721), Kharitas (1708-1922), Iqrarnamas (1604-1887), sammati patras (1730-1934), hasbul-hukums (1717-1733), navishthas (1720-1740), Mahzarnamas (1730-1934), yad-dashtas (1760-1899) and ruqqat khas (1730.1889). Farmans, Nishans, Manshurs, Akhbarat, Khatoot Maharajgan, Khatoot Ahalkaran and Kharitas proved of utmost importance in the writing of the thesis. The Waqaya and Hakikat were also of considerable help. The State Archives also hold files containing the correspondence exchanged between the rulers of Bikaner and the British authorities. The Persian correspondence as well as papers pertaining to the Bikaner Secretariat, covering the British

period, have helped the author to throw new light on various aspects of the relationship between Bikaner and the Central Power.

But by far the most valuable original material for the relationship between the House of Bikaner and the rulers of Delhi was discovered in the family archives of the Maharaja of Bikaner. The Bada Karkhana, the Toshakhana and the Daftar of the Hazuri held in their possession prior to the formation of Rajasthan, the correspondence exchanged between the rulers of Bikaner on the one hand and the Imperial rulers of Delhi, rulers of other princely States in India, high dignitaries in the State and other important officers on the other. A sustained effort to trace documents of historical value in these private collections resulted in the discovery of -

(a) over a hundred farmans, nishans and manshurs addressed to the rulers of Bikaner by the Imperial Mughals;

(b) numerous Kharitas exchanged between the rulers of Bikaner and the Mughal officers, Indian princes and the British political authorities;

(c) Kharita Bahis;

(d) Agreements, Sanads, Treaties and Engagements;

(e) demi-official correspondence conducted at a personal level between the rulers of Bikaner and the British authorities; and

(f) Fauj Bahis, Tour Records, compilations incorporating the details of the tours, journeys, voyages, expeditions etc., of the Bikaner rulers and the officers of the Government of India.

All the documents referred to above give detailed information, in some cases month by month and even oftener about the movements of the rulers of Bikaner, their policy, discussions in their Councils, and their campaigns and the activities of their opponents. These enabled the author to correct the errors and fill up the gaps in the current histories of the period.

No detailed history of the relationship between the House of Bikaner and the British can be written without going through the co-ordinated and corrected mass of manuscript correspondence

analysed with admirable skill and success in the files of the Foreign & Political Department prepared in connection with the preparation of a publication entitled "The House of Bikaner" now in possession of the Maharaja of Bikaner. Besides, the collection in the Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office, contain files of thousands of letters exchanged between Maharaja Ganga Singh and the members of the Chamber of Princes and the Political Agents, Residents, Agents to the Governor-General and the Viceroys. Though several files had been destroyed after the death of Maharaja Ganga Singh and also at the time of the Merger, the extant documents contain much valuable information which requires a close study.

In addition to the above archival sources deposited in the National Archives of India, New Delhi, the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner, Lallgarh Palace Records, Bikaner, Office of the Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner and the Anup Sanskrit Library, Bikaner, Umed Bhawan Palace Library, Jodhpur, Sumer Public Library, Jodhpur and the Bombay University Library, Bombay, the author consulted published works in Persian, Sanskrit, Rajasthani, Hindi and English. The bibliography is classified as follows:-

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THE RELATIONS OF THE HOUSE OF BIKANER WITH THE CENTRAL POWERS (1465 TO 1949)

By

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CHAPTER IX

The Role of Bikaner in the Unification of India.

Born on the 7th September, 1902, Maharaja Sadul Singh succeeded Maharaja Ganga Singh on his demise on the 2nd February, 1943 as the twenty-second ruler of Bikaner. Before he attained his majority at the age of eighteen, he had been placed with various Ministers and senior officers to acquire practical administrative training. On the attainment of his majority after holding a formal Darbar, Maharaja Ganga Singh invested him with the powers of Chief Minister[1] which post he held for four and a half years[2] and thus when he became the ruler of Bikaner, he had a full knowledge of the State administration.

The six years that Maharaja Sadul Singh was destined to reign actively were the years of great political turmoil and radical changes in the States as well as in British India. Many steps were taken in the Bikaner State itself to democratise the system of Government. During this very period India had come through the ravages of World War II and slowly but surely moved onwards to attain Independence.

The period of Maharaja Sadul Singh's reign was full of events pertaining to political relationship of the House of Bikaner with the Central Powers. The very first event on the Maharaja's accession to the throne was the decision of the Government of India to revert to the general system applicable to other States of political relationship being

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2278/XXVI, part II-B -Maharaja Ganga Singh's speech dated 9.9.1920 on the coming of age of Maharajkumar Sadul Singh.
2. Maharajkumar Sadul Singh requested for being permitted to relinquish the post of the Chief Minister early in 1925 and this was acceded to though reluctantly.

conducted through the Political Agent, in this case the Resident, Western Rajputana States, and not direct with the Resident for Rajputana. The Political Department of the Government of India was not happy at Maharaja Ganga Singh's success in establishing direct political relations, thus alone having this privilege amongst all States, and took the first opportunity of undoing it. As a matter of fact, there is a memo on record dated the 7th March, 1943 of points for talk with the Resident which shows that the Maharaja's consent was sought for and had to be acquiesced in by the Maharaja even prior to the presentation of the Viceroy's Kharita at the Darbar of the 8th March, 1943 on his accession.[1] It was only for reasons of courtesy that the implementation of the change was officially communicated some time later.[2]

While presenting the Kharita, the Resident in his speech said that the Maharaja had succeeded to the gaddi at a crucial time in the history of the world when the State could no longer be expected to remain unaffected by outside influences. He added that economic inter-dependence, increase in travel facilities and in their speed, impact of external ideas through newspapers and radio, all tended to make the State no longer self-contained or self-sufficient. He further pointed out that

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 41/XXVI, part III. This is also confirmed by Maharaja Sadul Singh's letter dated 23.3.1943 to Major Alington, Resident, Western Rajputana States, Jodhpur -Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.110/XV.

2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.184/XIV -Col.G.V.B.Gillan's (Resident for Rajputana) letter No.C/21-43 dated 25.3.1943 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.

   Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.110/XV -Major N.S.Alington, Resident for Western Rajputana States' letter dated 21.3.1943 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.

   Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 184/XIV; Maharaja Sadul Singh's letter dated 27.3.1943 to Col. Gillan.

the development of the people of India would also present problems but said that he was hopeful that the Maharaja would know how to make use of what was beneficial and discard what was harmful in the new political ideas as they developed.[1]

In his reply the Maharaja said that he realised that the world was passing through a crisis of unparalleled magnitude and that its emergence out of the struggle would surely witness far-reaching and all-embracing changes. He added that he believed that the States could no longer remain unaffected by these extraneous influences or escape the impact of the new and powerful currents of thought which would affect the whole world and realised how essential it was for the ruler to keep abreast of the times.[2]

The Maharaja had on his accession to the gaddi announced "Praja hit vratino Vayam" (in the service of my people) to be his motto and guiding principle and reiterated in his speech dated the 8th March, 1943 his desire to follow in the foot-steps of his illustrious father in the matter of introduction of constitutional reforms. He expressed his ardent hope of seeing his people associated with the administration of the State in an ever-increasing manner.[3]

The second World War was still going on with full vigour when Maharaja Sadul Singh succeeded to the gaddi. And the young Maharaja who, as heir-apparent, had already offered his sword and personal services in the cause, again expressed his desire for an opportunity to proceed on active service.[4] He also repeated the offer in his letter dated the 25th July, 1943 after becoming the Maharaja. The offer being accepted this time,

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 41/XXVIII, pt.III, Resident for Rajputana's speech dated 8.3.1943 at the Kharita Darbar held in Bikaner.
2. Ibid, Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 8.3.1943
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

the Maharaja, accompanied by his second son, Maharajkumar Amar Singh, left Bikaner on the 26th October, 1943, and visited the Sadul Light Infantry stationed in Persia, the 49 (Bikaner) G.P.T. Company stationed in Iraq as well as certain other units of other States Forces and Imperial and Allied troops including the 4th Indian Division and the 31st Indian and Armoured Division. He returned to India in November, 1943 and on his way to Bikaner visited the Ganga Risala which was then stationed in Sind.[1]

In November 1944, the Maharaja again proceeded to the Assam-Burma war theatre where the Bikaner Bijey Battery was engaged in active operations against the Japanese and returned to Bikaner in December, 1944.[2] While passing through Calcutta on his return home, the Maharaja received a tumultous reception by a lac or more people of Bikaner settled in Calcutta in pursuit of business. The Maharaja and his staff were the recipients of the 1939-45 Star, Burma Star, Defence Medal and the War Medal.[3]

Other main contributions of Bikaner towards war effort were the raising of the 2nd and 3rd Infantry Battalions[4], an Infantry training centre, an Artillary training centre, and a Guard Battalion. Besides, a Prisoners of War camp had also been opened in Bikaner and two war hospitals started to provide relief to the wounded and the sick. These war hospitals were

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1. Bikaner and the War (1939-45), p. 8
2. Ibid, p. 9
3. A list showing the honours, titles, medals, etc., of Maharaja Sadul Singh is given at Appendix XXXII
4. The 2nd Infantry Battalion was later named as the Karni Infantry.

visited by Lord and Lady Wavell in February, 1944 and Lady Mountbatten in 1945 who spoke highly of them.[1] The monetary contributions, including those for the purchase of light tanks and aeroplanes and providing amenities to Indian and British soldiers and relief to the people of London as also for other relief works like the Red Cross, amounted to Rs. 1519063-6-2 both from the State and the Maharaja's Privy Purse.[2] It was in recognition of the various war services of the Maharaja and the Bikaner State forces that the Commander-in-Chief presented a saluting gun to the Maharaja on the 23rd December, 1946. The presentation was made by Lt.General Sir Frank Messervy, at Bikaner when in his speech he paid glowing tributes to the services rendered by the various units of the Bikaner State Forces.[3] A Japanese officers sword surrendered to

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1. Lord Wavell recorded his opinion as under:-
   "My wife and I visited No. 1 war hospital on February 3 and were much impressed by its efficiency and by all that is being done for the cure and comfort of the patients."

   Lady Mountbatten wrote as below:-
   "I was so much impressed by the very excellent accommodation and magnificient equipment in them all and by the exceptional care being given to the patients and I know what a difference your own close and personal interest in them has meant and what great encouragement it gives to all working in them, and receiving treatment there. I shall much look forward to telling the King and Queen of your fine gesture, which among many others has made such a great contribution to the war effort"
   - Bikaner and the War (1939-45), p. 49

2. Bikaner and the War(1939-45), pp. 29-75

3. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. 4, No. 5, January, 1947, pp.7-8; speech made by Lt.Gen.Sir Frank Messervy at Bikaner on the 23rd December, 1946 -
   "It is my pleasant duty to present to you on behalf of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and the Indian Army this gun in recognition of the services of Your Highness and the Bikaner State Forces in the World War of 1939-45.

   x x x

   The Ganga Risala was the first to leave the State and the first of the units of the Indian States forces to go overseas on active service. This famous regiment returned

...contd. next page.

the Allied Forces in the South East Asia Command was also presented to the Maharaja in recognition of Bikaner's contribution to the victory in South East Asia. The Maharaja was also presented with a war souvenir on behalf of the South East Asia Command.[1]

It may be mentioned here that the House of Bikaner had always kept its plighted word under the treaty relations to stand by the side of the Crown and the Bikaner State's Forces had served side by side with the armed forces of the British empire in the service of the King Emperor whenever an occasion arose. In the words of Maharaja Sadul Singh, there had hardly

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to the State after serving with distinction both overseas and in the Sind desert against the Hurs for four and a half years.

The next unit to go was the Sadul Light Infantry which served outside the State for more than five years and carried out its many tasks in PAIFORCE with zeal and efficiency. Next, I must mention the Bijey Battery which served on the north-west frontier from 1941 and later in the 7th Indian Division in Burma till the end of 1945. I was proud to have them under my command during the year and a half I commanded the 7th Indian Division and would like to pay my personal tribute to their gallantry and efficiency in the many battles which have made the 7th Division (Indian) famous.

In addition to these major units excellent work was done by 49 G.T.Coy and by a large number of Bikaner State subjects who enlisted and served in regular units of the Indian Army.

Behind these gallant troops the whole time were ranged Your Highness and the people of Bikaner State forwarding the war effort by every means at your disposal. I know the personal encouragement given by Your Highness during your visits to your own troops and the soldiers serving in the Indian Army from your State in the various theatres of War.

On behalf of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief and the whole Indian Army I express our admiration and our gratitude for the unstinted help given us by Your Highness and your people."

1. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. IV, No.9 -April 1947, p.17

been any great military operation in which the empire was involved since the coming into operation of the treaty relations with the Crown, where the units of the Bikaner army had not played their due part.[1]

Inspite of his keen desire to play as important a role as possible to bring about a successful termination of the war, the Maharaja was at the same time ever mindful of the welfare of the people of Bikaner and of his promise to progressively associate them with the administration of the State which fact was always upper-most in his heart.[2] Since a major portion of Bikaner lies in the Thar Desert, the question of making water available, in adequate quantities and for providing the supply of potable water for the inhabitants of this vast area had become a top priority project for the Maharaja. With this in view, the Maharaja, as a first measure, created in 1943 the Sadul Water Supply and rural reconstruction fund with a sum of forty lacs of rupees for the purpose.[3] Further, the education of the people of Bikaner so as to enable them to ~~take~~ play their due part in the development of the State was very dear to his heart. In order to provide incentive to promote extensive education, the Maharaja instituted in 1945 two scholarships at the Roorkie Engineering College, with facilities for further training in America to deserving Bikaner students by donating a sum of £5000/-[4] The Maharaja also donated a sum of rupees four lacs to the Benaras Hindu University for the Greater India Scholarships. The sum was meant to provide 13 scholarships of the value of Rs.75/- each

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1. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. IV, No. 6 -January 1947; speech made by Maharaja Sadul Singh on the 23rd December, 1946 while accepting the Saluting Gun presented to him by the Commander-in-Chief in recognition of services in the World War 1939-45
2. Maharaja Sadul Singh's message dated 26.5.1945 to the Legislative Assembly.
3. Note on some salient features of the first eighteen months of His Highness the Maharaja's reign, p. 3
4. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. IV, No. 6 - January 1947, p. 32

per month, eight of which were earmarked for students belonging to the Indian communities settled in different parts of the world, and one each meant for students from Combodia, Siam, Indonesia, Laos and Bali islands.[1] A further sum of rupees one lakh was donated to the Benaras Hindu University at the same time for the construction of a hostel to be named Ganga Bhawan and a temple garden to be called Sadul Vatika.[2]

Before we come to the final phase in the history of the rapid political changes in the Bikaner State leading to its merger with the Indian Union it will be pertinent to digress and review in brief the impact of the British on the State especially during the reigns of Maharaja Ganga Singh and the first half of Maharaja Sadul Singh's reign.

Like the rest of India, modern Bikaner was profoundly influenced by its association with the British. Not only the administrative system but the culture of the State experienced a rapid change with the advent of English education and British ideas flowing into the body politic of the State. In the modernisation and westernisation of the State administration, Maharaja Ganga Singh was faithfully served by foreign officers as well as Indians.While the utilisation of foreign talent in the Bikaner State administration has been a subject of a little criticism, the Maharaja himself has clarified his position during his speech in reply to a banquet address given to him where he said -

> "..... I am aware that there is a certain amount of unfriendly criticism in this connection (British officers participating in the administration of the State) in certain quarters outside our State. But where the interests of the administration are concerned, I allow no room for other considerations. When I feel that the employment of British officers will tand to greater efficiency and usefulness; when the members of my Council feel, as they do, that the British officers

1. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. 4, No. 9-April, 1947, p. 15
2. Prime Minister's (Bikaner State) office file No. 8 of 1949 (in the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner).

> are of conspicuous ability and thus eminently fitted to fill the positions they occupy and that they satisfactorily discharge the duties entrusted to them, it is only natural that we should avail ourselves of their services. Otherwise we should be failing in our duty to the State."

Some of the officers in the Bikaner State who hailed from foreign countries as for example, Mr. G.D.Rudkin, a British National who was Revenue Minister, is known to have himself lived in the desert in a tent and travelled on camel's back in Rajputana during the scorching summer heat while laying out the Gang Canal project. It is due to the untiring work of this man that the Gang Canal project took its final shape in a record time and the arid zones of northern Bikaner were turned into a green belt of Bikaner which was later known as the granary of Bikaner. The names of a few other important foreign officials may be mentioned here. They were -

1. Mr. A.W.E. Standley, Secretary, Public Works Department.
2. Mr. Hamilton Hardinge, Inspector General of Police and later Home Minister.
3. Mr. J.Fearfield, Manager, Bikaner State Railway.
4. Mr. R.H.T.Mackenzie, Chief Engineer, P.W.Department.
5. Mr. Charles Todhunter, Adviser.
6. Mr. B.A. English, Director of Education.
7. Mr. S.C.Cook, Electrical & Mechanical Engineer.
8. Dr. Weingarten, Principal Medical Officer (German Jew)
9. Dr. Van Allen, Chief Surgeon (American).

Ministers began to be appointed and in course of time we see that the administrative set up of the Bikaner State began to be run to a large extent parallel to that of British India. The Ministers were served in turn by a highly efficient civil service[1]. While the Maharaja himself held all the powers of chief executive, nevertheless, the legislative assembly was introduced as far back as 1912, again a legacy of British

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1. As a result of the efficiency of the Bikaner services, many of its officers were posted to the highest posts in the Rajasthan Government at the time of Integration. Appendix XXXIII.

contact with India and functioned very smoothly till Integration.

While Urdu was the court language in Bikaner and was later superseded by Hindi, English language began to be given a most important place when all correspondence in the State began to be conducted in the English language. Most of the proceedings of the legislative assembly were in Hindi. The idea of separating judiciary from the executive was also borrowed from the British political thought and introduced in Bikaner as far back as 1912.

English was introduced in the schools as a compulsory medium and was followed in the same way as in British India. It was not common to find people conversing in English even in the city. But after the introduction of English, boys and girls in village schools knew how to read, write and speak English.

Maharaja Ganga Singh was very proud of his hospitals and these were manned by a large number of doctors from America, England and Germany for the betterment of humanity.

After World War II, Bikaner State also acquired some aeroplanes and Maharaja Sadul Singh himself used a British Dove aircraft for his travels. Plans for a flying club in Bikaner, however, were not possible owing to the Integration of the State although a proposal for such a club was awaiting Government sanction. The author was one of the first Bikaneris to get the private pilot's licence.

Club life and foreign sports became quite popular and were encouraged at all levels including schools and colleges. During Maharaja Ganga Singh's reign, perhaps influenced by his trips abroad, modern westernised dress was introduced in Bikaner and officers and the royal family often dressed in modern western style although the Indian style, Achkan and Safa, continued on ceremonial occasions.

Modern techniques of agriculture and irrigation were introduced in the Bikaner State by Maharaja Ganga Singh with great benefit. Though situated in a dry belt of Rajasthan, in the Thar desert, Bikaner has always been proud of its beautiful

flowers. Both at Lallgarh and Gajner as also in the public gardens, beautiful gardens exist and the winter flowers are a on display to be seen. In Ganganagar, after the advent of Gang Canal, growing of many citrus fruits of various varieties have been experimented with success. The Ganganagar Maltas have won the all India prizes in agricultural shows. Ganganagar today boasts of the highest number of tractors employed anywhere in India.

Industrialisation also received impetus. In Maharaja Sadul Singh's reign the industrial growth of Bikaner was given a great fillip. Transport and communication were considerably improved in the time of Maharaja Ganga Singh and Maharaja Sadul Singh. Railway lines were extended and most large cities were linked by trains and roadways. Electrification of towns was taken up in the time of Maharaja Ganga Singh and the thermal plant could give electricity not only to the city of Bikaner but as far as Ratangarh and Churu situated half way between Delhi and Bikaner. Maharaja Sadul Singh had a plan for having a grid, and it was also his plan that all towns with a population of 5000 and over should have electricity. In the later years, especially in the time of Maharaja Sadul Singh, there was a sharp change in architectural planning. It was influenced by the British and European architects in Bikaner like Mr. Mackenzie and Broomfield.[1]

In food and drink, the English and French menus found their way into the culinary department and it was not unusual to see banquet or dinner parties conducted in western style with menus written in French.

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1. Several new townships were planned by Maharaja Sadul Singh who was most interested in town planning. Many of these works of town planning never left the paper stage due to the Integration of the State. Immediately after the Integration, the entire emphasis on development shifted to Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan and the growth of erstwhile capitals of other States suddenly was retarded.

PLATE XVI



Conquest of Mars, an oil painting by author.
(37"x26")

Western music also invaded the cultural life of Bikaner and it was not an uncommon sight to see Western ballroom dances in the clubs and big dinner parties at the palaces. The Ganga Risala had one of the finest military bands in the country and was on occasions specially requested at Abu, the seat of Agent to the Governor-General for Rajputana, during the summer months. Maharaja Sadul Singh also maintained a seven-piece orchestra, which played western symphonic music as also western dance music. This was greatly appreciated by Lord Mountbatten when he visited Bikaner in 1948 and heard the orchestra both western symphonic and Indian classical music during lunch and dinner.

By a proclamation in 1946[1] the Maharaja announced his decision to reconstitute the Bikaner Legislative Assembly on a more popular basis; and to achieve that end, the appointment of the Constitution Committee and the Franchise and Constituency Committee for formulating and submitting a draft constitution and demarcating constituencies respectively.[2]

Though the proclamation was well-received by the people generally, the Bikaner Praja Parishad, the counterpart of Indian National Congress, entertained some doubts and suspicion. Yet its leaders announced in the press that they would not precipitate matters and that the working committee of the Praja Parishad and the workers' convention had decided to cooperate with the Bikaner Government in the constitution and franchise committees.[3] After due deliberations, the Bikaner Constitution Act, 1947 conferring a Government, which while functioning under the aegis of the Maharaja, would be responsible to the people, was duly promulgated in December, 1947. The seemingly long interval between the proclamation of August, 1946, and the promulgation of the Act was due to the

1. Proclamation of Maharaja Sadul Singh dated 31.8.1946. The Statesman, 4.9.1946
2. Proclamation of Maharaja Sadul Singh dated 31.8.1946
3. Hindustan Times, 27.9.1946

amount of work involved in eliciting public opinion from different interests on franchise and constitution as also to the great upheaval that the country witnessed as a result of partition and the great strain to which the Bikaner Government was specially put to in arranging safe passage to lacs of migrants both from India to Pakistan and from Pakistan to India in the world's biggest and most gigantic migration of fleeing humanity.

The 1947 Act brought into existence a bicameral legislature based on wide franchise; and the entire administration, with certain reservations, was entrusted to a council responsible to the legislature. It also contemplated introduction of full responsible government under the aegis of the ruler within a period of two years.[1]

However, with a view to further hastening the introduction of full responsible government, the Maharaja announced on the 2nd February, 1948[2] his decision to establish responsible government in April, 1948 and also dispensed with the interim arrangements envisaged in the Bikaner Constitution Act of 1947. In March 1948 the Maharaja further reiterated[3] his decision of January, 1948 that the Constitution Act would be open to amendment by the new legislature after the elections. He also expressed his intention to make further modifications in the Act itself including the franchise, adding that this would necessitate the postponement of elections for some time. But as an immediate step, the Maharaja announced the formation of an Interim Coalition Ministry from the 18th March, 1948, to replace his Executive Council to carry on the day to day administration of the State during the intervening period.[4]

The coalition ministry was to consist of the Congress

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1. Proclamation of Maharaja Sadul Singh dated 4.12.1947
2. Proclamation of Maharaja Sadul Singh dated 2.2.1948
3. Proclamation of Maharaja Sadul Singh dated 18.3.1948
4. Ibid.

representatives and the Maharaja's nominees representing different interests in the State on a fifty-fifty basis. After protracted consultations and discussions between the Congress and the Maharaja regarding the terms of the Congress joining the government and the allocation of portfolios, a coalition ministry was eventually formed on the 18th March, 1948 comprising of -

1. Kanwar Jaswant Singh of Daudsar[1], Prime Minister
2. Chaudhari Hardutt Singh (Congress) Dy.Prime Minister
3. Pandit Gauri Shankar (Congress)
4. Sardar Mastan Singh (Congress)
5. Chaudhari Kumbha Ram (Congress)
6. Name to be announced latter
7. Thakur Kumer Singh of Manakrasar
8. Seth Kushal Chand Daga
9. Pandit Suraj Karan Acharya, and
10. Mohammad Ahmad Baksh Sindhi.

At the time of the formation of the coalition ministry, an understanding was reached that the Congress would participate in the general elections which had been announced to take place on the 23rd September, 1948 and subsequent days and that in the meantime the ministry would function under the existing rules of procedure.

For some time the work went on smoothly. But it was noticed after some time that the dissident group in the Congress i.e. the group which did not favour the formation of the coalition ministry began to agitate against the State. In

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1. Kanwar Jaswant Singh is the son of Major Thakur Prithviraj Singh of Daudsar. He graduated from the Benaras Hindu University in 1927. He was Assistant Private Secretary to Maharaja Ganga Singh from 19.7.1931 and Private Secretary for 1931-36 and 1937-40. He became Foreign and Political Secretary in 1940 and was appointed Public Works Minister in 1941, which post he held till 1948. In 1948 he was appointed Prime Minister. He accompanied Maharaja Ganga Singh to England and Europe in 1930 and again in 1931 when the Maharaja went there to attend the Imperial Conference, League of Nations and the Round Table Conferences and was in close touch with him.

order to refute the allegations of the agitators, a public meeting was called in the Sunaron-ki-Gawar at Bikaner and was addressed by Jaswant Singh when other ministers including the Congress nominees were also present. The meeting, however, ended in rowdism and the congress ministers, instead of trying to quieten the mischievous element and restore order, deserted the meeting.

The agitation continued and the Congress dissidents now raised their voice for the merger of the State. The Maharaja brought these activities of the dissidents to the notice of Sardar Patel, and in view of the fact that the Bikaner State had been classified as a viable[1] unit and also that the Maharaja was not only anxious to introduce more responsible government in the State but had actually taken steps for its implementation and the general elections were not far off, he asked the Sardar to see that the agitation was stopped forthwith and, in fact, the agitation did stop.

Some time later the Maharaja had to proceed to England on medical grounds and the author of this book, as heir-apparent, in consultation with his mother, Rajmata Sudarshan Kumariji, was to deputise for him during his absence. The Maharaja had also made arrangements for the advice of Shri Meharchand Mahajan, at the time adviser to the Maharaja, being available to the author. It was noticed that the Congress ministers soon began to disregar the extant rules of procedure. An instance in point was the summary dismissal by a Congress minister of a Head of Department on the spot when, according to the rules,he could

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1. States which had individual representation in the Constituent Assembly were to be treated as viable units. In addition to individual representation, a viable State was also that State which had a population of over ten lacs and an income of one crore or more. Bikaner's income at the time of integration was 3.00 crores and it had a population of a little over 13 lacs according to 1941 census. In 1951 Bikaner's population stood at

be removed only by the orders of the Maharaja. Moreover, the officer was on a fixed tenure and could not be removed before the expiry of his term. The Prime Minister did not agree with the Minister's action. The Congress Ministers made it a case of prestige. Since the Maharaja was away in England, the heir-apparent, deputising for him, referred the matter to him in England and the case was ordered to be kept pending till the Maharaja's return. The officer was subsequently reinstated by the Maharaja on his return, after a full enquiry into the circumstances of the case.

The general elections in the Bikaner State had been announced to take place on the 23rd September, 1948 and following days, and the work was proceeding smoothly when in August, 1948 the State Congress Committee demanded postponement of the elections. As the Maharaja was away in Europe at the time the Maharaja was apprised of the demand by the author. Since, however, the author had explicit instructions from the Maharaja to ensure that the work of granting responsible government by the time stipulated must not be allowed to suffer under any circumstances, and further, as no cogent reasons were advanced for the desired postponement of the elections by the Congress, he could not accede to the request to put the clock of democracy back. Being a firm believer in democracy and sharing his father's determination to see that Bikaner held its elections on time and that democratic government was ushered in as soon as possible, it was imperative that the elections schedule be followed. He still recollects vividly the visits of Shri Hiralal Shastri and Shri Gokul Bhai Bhatt, Congress leaders of Rajasthan, and the long discussions they had with him on the subject of postponement of elections.[1]

1. Strangely enough four years later, Shri Gokul Bhai Bhatt and Shri Jai Narain Vyas were defeated in the first general elections for the Assembly seats for Rajasthan; Shri Hiralal Shastri having not contested the elections. On the formation of the Greater Rajasthan, Hiralal Shastri became the first Chief Minister for sometime but resigned about January, 1951 He was succeeded by C.S.Venkatachar who remained in office for some time and in April, 1951 Shri Jai Narain Vayas became

...contd. next page.

Whatever explanation the Bikaner State Congress Committee might have given for the basis of their demand, and these were later duly refuted by Maharaja Sadul Singh on his return, in a press communique[1], the fact remained that the Bikaner State Congress Committee wanted to gain time as it was not sure of its hold on the people. It had considerable doubts of its success in the elections. The intention not to contest the elections and face a show-down was understandable particularly when the States Peoples Conference had tried to convince the world that they had complete control over public opinion in the States. Whether this claim was justified in the case of Bikaner and Jodhpur is a doubtful matter. As a matter of fact the Congress lost the Parliamentary seat from Bikaner in the very first general elections in 1952 -just four years later, as also in 1957 and 1962 and has upto date not been able to return its candidate to the Rajasthan Assembly from the Bikaner city.[2]

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the Chief Minister. Later, Jai Narain Vyas being defeated in the general elections, he vacated the office in March, 1952 but subsequently having won in bye-election from Kishangarh in September, 1952, he again became the Chief Minister and held the office till 1954.

1. Maharaja Sadul Singh's press communique dated 1.9.1948
2. The results of the general elections for the Rajasthan Vidhan Sabha may be interesting to note -

	1952		1957		1962
Congress	82	...	120	...	89 *
Independent	35	...		...	21
Jan Sangh	8	...	56	...	15
Swatantra	-	...		...	36
Others	35	...		...	15
Total	160	...	176	...	176

* As a matter of fact when the results were announced, the position was Congress 88 and all others 88, but later on one independent joined the Congress group.

Results of general elections for seats from Rajasthan for the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha were:

Year	Lok Sabha			Rajya Sabha		
	Congress	Opposition	total	Congress	Opposition	To ta
1952	12	8	20	6	3	9
1957	18	3	21	9	1	10
1962	15	6	21	7	3	10

However, as it is, the Bikaner State Congress Committee, by its resolution of the 28th August, 1948, created an impasse by deciding not to participate in the general elections and also by calling upon its representatives in the coalition ministry to tender their resignations. In complete contradiction to this demand for postponement were the views of Mahatma Gandhi who had written to N.C. Kelkar that he would like the States to grant autonomy to their subjects and the rulers to regard themselves as the trustees of the people.[1] Yet when the Maharaja was trying to introduce full responsible government in the State, the Congress-run Praja Parishad was doing its best to obstruct its passage. This created an unfortunate situation; and the Maharaja, who was constantly being kept in touch by the heir-apparent, returned to Bikaner on the 31st August, 1948. He immediately set himself to the task of resolving the tangle if he could and a letter was addressed to the President of the Bikaner State Congress Committee for elucidation and substantiation of the various points involved asking for a reply by the 4th September, 1948, so that the election schedule would not be disturbed.[2] Though on strictly democratic principles any party not participating in the process of democratisation should have been left out and the elections carried on ushering in thereby the dawn of a completely democratic administration, the part played by the Congress in the freedom struggle had made, in the minds of many, the need of Congress participation imperative. The Maharaja, therefore, secured an appointment with Sardar Patel and went to Delhi where, at a lunch with the Sardar at his house, the Maharaja

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1. M.K.Gandhi; The Indian States Problem, p. 65 -
   In his letter dated 2.7.1934 Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Shri N.C. Kelkar -
   "I would like the States to grant autonomy to their subjects and would like the princes to regard themselves as and be in fact trustees for the people over whom they rule, drawing for themselves only a small and definite percentage of the income. I have not lost hope that the princes will deem it a pride to become real trustees of their people. I do not seek to destroy their States."
2. Maharaja Sadul Singh's press communique dated 1.9.1948

discussed the subject with him. The Maharaja was advised to discuss the matter with V.P. Menon, and Hiralal Shastri, Jai Narain Vyas and Gokul Bhai Bhatt who were also in Delhi at the time. Finally, the Maharaja was advised to postpone the elections.

The Maharaja returned to Bikaner on the 6th September, 1948. The Congress ministers had tendered their resignations and the Maharaja had no option but to accept them, dissolve the interim ministry and postpone the elections. This decision was announced in a press communique dated 7th September, 1948. At the same time the Maharaja also announced his intention to appoint a Prime Minister from outside the State so that no one might have any genuine cause for complaint and till the services of such an officer could be obtained on loan from the Government of India, the Maharaja decided that Kanwar Jaswant Singh of Daudsar should carry on as the Prime Minister.[1] These changes were brought into effect by necessary administrative orders from the 8th September, 1948. Kanwar Jaswant Singh carried on as the Prime Minister till C.S.Venkatachar, I.C.S., former Dewan of Jodhpur, took over in October, 1948.

This precipitate action on the part of the Bikaner Congress let the chance slip whereby Bikaner would have attained full responsible government even earlier than the rest of the country. Their diffidence in their claim that they had the backing of popular demand for merger became quite apparent, at least in so far as Bikaner was concerned.

It may be recalled that in consequence of the crisis in the affairs of India following the Japanese advance, Churchil had made an announcement in the House of Commons on the 11th March 1942 that the War Cabinet was sending out Sir Stafford Cripps to India to remove the doubts and apprehensions of the

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1. Maharaja Sadul Singh's press communique dated 7.9.1948 The Bikaner Rajpatra-Extraordinary, dated 8.9.1948

Indian people regarding the proposals made by the British Government for grant of reforms to meet their aspirations. The proposals were, however, either to be accepted in whole or rejected in toto. Sir Stafford Cripps arrived in India on the 22nd March, 1942. The proposals, so far as they concerned the Indian States, contemplated a revision of the treaty arrangements.[1] The rulers met Sir Stafford Cripps on 2nd April, 1942, and Maharaja Sadul Singh was one of the delegates, the other representative being the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar and the Maharaja of Patiala. After considerable discussion, the Indian States' delegation adopted a resolution[2] that in the interests of the country the princes would be prepared to make all reasonable contribution compatible with their sovereignty and integrity of their States. But the offer that Sir Stafford Cripps had brought was rejected both by the Congress and the Muslim League and hence the question of its acceptance by the Princes did not arise.

Later, recognising the trend of the times, the imminence of the changes necessarily to follow, and the tirade often hurled by British Indian leaders against the administration of the Indian States, the Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes appointed in 1944 a small committee of rulers, with Maharaja Sadul Singh as its chairman, to formulate proposals for a minimum standard of efficient administration. While speaking in the Princes' Standing Committee on the Report of

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1. V.P.Menon; The Story of the Integration of the Indian States, p. 48

2. Resolution dated 10.4.1942 passed by the Indian States delegation -

"The Indian States will be glad as always, in the interest of their motherland, to make their contribution in every reasonable manner compatible with the sovereignty and integrity of the States, towards the framing of a constitutio for India. The States should be assured, however, that in the event of a number of States not finding it feasible to adhere, the non-adhering States or groups of States so desiring would have the right to form a union of their own, with full sovereign status in accordance with a suitable and approved procedure derived for the purpose."

this committee, generally known as the Bikaner Committee, the Maharaja stressed that the States had claimed and had been recognised as an 'order' with the result that the States system was judged not by the efficiency of the better governed States but by the standards of those States which for no fault of theirs but for lack of resources were not in a position to afford necessary service to the people.[1] He further pointed out that it was no more possible to hold fast to the principle of isolation, and urged the princes to get down to brass tacks and do something practical before it was too late.[2] In order to achieve this end he suggested the grouping of the smaller states either with bigger States or amongst themselves so as to form units capable of making provisions for meeting essential requirements under modern conditions. He added that if this were agreed to in principle, a scheme might be evolved as to how best to safeguard their position, the discussion of which had been agreed to by the Viceroy and the Political Adviser to the Government of India.[3] The Maharaja justified his stand from

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1. Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 30-9-1945 at the Informal Princes Standing Committee: "Public opinion rightly or wrongly equates the States with the conditions prevailing in these States."

2. Ibid.
   "Unless we make even at this last moment, a real effort and agree among ourselves to do something practical, here and now, without delay, it may be too late."

3. Ibid -
   ".....This being so, if we are to safeguard against any undue pressure being brought to bear individually or collectively on any group of States from the Political Department or the Political Officers - as complaints in this regard are being heard from some of Your Highnesses from time to time - and if we are to prevent the Political Department from going ahead with their own schemes in their own way which is not liked by a large number of Princes of the smaller States, then to my mind there is little doubt that we should have some kind of an agreed alternative scheme which we can put forward. If we can have such a scheme, I for one think there will not be very great difficulty in getting the Political Department to modify their policy to a certain extent in regard to those matters where reasonable objection can be taken and to put them right."

another aspect. He believed that before long the princes would be faced with the problem of how the States were going to fit into the future set up of India,[1] and warned them that unless the smaller States formed into groups which could provide necessary amenities to the people and march on with the times, they were likely to be wiped out.[2] Soon after, the Maharaja reiterated his convictions in a confidential circular to the princes wherein he said that the passing of time would convince them whether or not his views were sound, and emphasized that the policy of drift and delay would be suicidal to them.[3] His foreboding soon came true.

In February 1946 the Maharaja once again pointed out that there could be no two opinions on the question of States' participation in the constitution making Assembly. He reiterated his sentiments, earlier expressed, in a message to the Bikaner Legislative Assembly and said "through Bikaner we are proud of India, and in desiring

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1. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. 5, No. 1-August 1947; Mr. K.M. Panikkar's speech dated 7.8.1947 at the inauguration of the Bikaner Chamber of Commerce -

   "His Highness was one of the first to foresee the trend of events. Months before the war ended, when there was no talk of immediate Independence, so early as April 1945, His Highness moved his brother-princes to establish an organisation to work out a scheme for cooperation with British India to share the freedom which he saw clearly was coming to India."

2. Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 30-9-1945 at the Informal Princes' Standing Committee meeting -

   "Another aspect that appears to me of importance is that before very long we shall be discussing how the States are going to fit in the future constitution of India. Public opinion and pressure on the part of the political parties in British India, and very soon after a little more spread of education public opinion within our own States and from our own people, will demand a higher standard of administration and living conditions..... a great surge will come which will wipe off those States which do not march in conformity with the times."

3. Maharaja Sadul Singh's circular letter dated 24.10.1945 to the Princes.

the greatness of India, we yield to none in our patriotism to our mother country and in our anxiety to see her rise to her full stature and fill in her own right her due and honoured place in the comity of nations."[1] He welcomed the statement of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru made at the Indian States Peoples Conference held at Udaipur that the approach to the princes should be a friendly one. Bikaner for one had nothing to fear. It was already marching with the times and all necessary reforms were being duly introduced. According to K.M.Panikkar "Bikaner, under its farsighted Ruler" stood "ready and prepared to face the future." Panikkar was confident that Bikaner by virtue of its historical importance, geographical position, size, population, revenue, and its potentialities for the future would be entitled to a position which would ensure her internal sovereignty and autonomy as also give her a voice in all India affairs.[2]

In March, 1946 the Cabinet Mission[3] was appointed "with the intention of making a supreme effort to break the deadlock between Britain and the Indians on the one hand, and Congress and the Muslim League on the other"[4] The Mission was authorised to make decisions on the spot to convince India of Britafn's sincerity in going ahead with their promise of granting Independence. The mission arrived in India on the 23rd March, 1946.

The princes had already been given an assurance that no changes would be affected in their relations with the Crown

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1. Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 12.2.1946 at a Banquet given in his honour by Mr. K.M.Panikkar at Ganga Niwas, fort, Bikaner in connection with the celebrations of the birth of a grandson to the Maharaja.
2. K.M. Panikkar's speech dated 12.2.1946 at a banquet given by him in honour of Maharaja Sadul Singh.
3. The Mission composed of Lord Pethick Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and Mr. A.V.Alexander.
4. Lennard Mosley; The Last Days of the British Raj, p. 20

or in the rights guaranteed by their treaties or engagements without their consent. This assurance was repeated by Lord Wavell in his letter of the 12th March, 1946, wherein it was affirmed that "there was no intention of making proposals for the entry of States into the Indian set up, on any basis other than that of negotiation."[1] After discussion[2] and correspondence with the Chamber of Princes and its representatives, the Cabinet Mission issued a memorandum dated the 12th May, 1946[3] wherein it said that the Chamber of Princes had confirmed that the Indian States fully shared the country's desire for the immediate attainment by India of her full stature. The memorandum added that the rights of the States which accrued from their relationship with the Crown would no longer exist and the rights surrendered by them to the Crown would revert to them and that the void so caused by the lapse of paramountcy would have to be filled in by the States entering into new relationships. The memorandum further referred to "the desirability of the States, in suitable cases, forming or joining administrative units large enough to enable them to be fitted into the constitutional scheme as also of conducting negotiations with British India."[4] And in the

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1. White Paper on Indian States, p. 28

2. Maharaja Sadul Singh had also been invited to participate in the discussions with the Cabinet Mission and he left Bikaner for Delhi on the 29th March, 1946 for the purpose.

3. White Paper on Indian States, pp. 152-53

4. Ibid, p. 29

Cabinet Mission's plan announced on the 16th May, 1946 the proposals, so far as they concerned the Indian States, were that there should be a Union of India comprising both of British India and the Indian States which should deal with foreign affairs, Defence and communications and that the States should retain all subjects and powers other than those ceded to the Union. The representation of the States in the Constituent Assembly was not to exceed 93 and was to be determined by consultation. The States unanimously accepted the plan but not without internal difficulties, and it was as a result of the efforts of Maharaja Sadul Singh that an unanimous decision was possible.[1]

The acceptance of this plan of the 16th May, 1946 was acclaimed by the Maharaja as the greatest step forward that had been taken in the cause of India's march to Independence. According to him the princes were not to be anxious about their position in a free India, only if they realised the significance of the changes and adapted themselves accordingly.[2] So far as the Bikaner State was concerned, he said that he had recently an occasion to meet Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Pandit Nehru and discuss with them the reforms[3] that he was

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1. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. 5, No. 1-August, 1947; Mr. K.M. Panikkar's speech dated 7.8.1947 at the inauguration of the Bikaner Chamber of Commerce -
   "It is not to be thought that this decision was taken without some internal difficulties. There was an influential group of princes and ministers whose approach to the question was not that of an Indian Union but of a Union of Princely India, a third partition which was meant to break up the body of Hindustan into bits and leave it bleeding and incapable..... It was the firmness of His Highness the Maharaja and his friends that nipped in the bud this dangerous move....."
2. Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 27.7.1946 -
   "....The acceptance of the scheme of May 16, proposing a Union of India consisting of both the States and the provinces is the greatest step forward that has been taken in the cause of India's march to Independence..... I have never felt that if the princes and the States take into due consideration the real significance of the changes that are taking place in India now and adjust their mental outlook and policies accordingly, they need not have any apprehensions about their due place in a free India. It has to be clearly visualised that what is happening is in essence a profound transformation."
3. As envisaged under the Bikaner Constitution Act, 1947.

at the time planning to introduce and that their reactions were favourable and friendly.[1]

The Cabinet Mission plan had proposed a single government for India with the centre responsible for Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications only; and for the rest, the country was to be divided into three groups, group A with Hindu majority, group B with Muslim majority and group C where the Muslims would have a small majority. The Muslim League took these proposals as clear cut and precise, and was prepared to accept them. But as soon as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru became the President of the Congress in July, 1946, he expressed the opinion at a press conference that the plan could be modified but asserted that the Congress was "unfettered by agreements and free to meet all situations," as they arose.[2] The Muslim League immediately suspected trickery and treachery and on July 27, 1946 withdrew its acceptance ~~to~~ of the Cabinet Plan. August 16 was declared as the Direct~~ion~~ Action Day and the result was the massacre of Hindus in Calcutta which lit the flame of communal frenzy. In the next one year it enveloped the sub-continent of India and left in its wake a million men, women and children horribly massacred on both sides of the border[3]

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1. Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 27.7.1946 - "Some of you know that before I recently returned from Bombay I was happy to have met Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel and Pandit Nehru. I have had long, heart to heart talks with them about the present political situation in India and in regard to the States generally. I also took the opportunity to explain to them my intentions about constitutional reforms as envisaged by me in the Bikaner State. It pleased me greatly to see as I had expected that their reactions were altogether favourable and friendly. Not only did they congratulate me on the bold step forward that I had taken, but I brought back with me the happy memory that they were watching with keen interest the developments in the State and were eagerly waiting to see the success of the great experiment that I have decided to launch."
2. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad; India Wins Freedom, pp.155 and 162 This led to a reiteration by the Muslim League of their demand for Pakistan and the ultimate partition of India. According to Maulana Azad "the mistake of 1946 proved even more costly."
3. Leonard Mosley; The Last days of the British Raj, pp.33-35

Lord Wavell was appalled, and in order to restore confidence of the Muslim League in the Congress, he called Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi to sign a declaration which ran as follows:-

> "The Congress are prepared in the interests of communal harmony to accept the intention of the statement of 16 May (the Cabinet Mission statement) that provinces cannot exercise any option affecting their membership of the sections or of the groups if formed, until the decision contemplated in paragraph 19 (vii) of the statement of 16 May is taken by the new legislature after the new constitutional arrangements have come into operation and the first general elections have been held."[1]

The result, however, was misunderstanding and ill-will. Lord Wavell had lost the confidence of both the Congress in India and Mr. Attlee in England who over-ruled him by ordering the establishment of the Interim Government without delay and it was sworn in on September 2, 1946. The Constituent Assembly began functioning from the 9th December, 1946. The Standing Committee of the Chamber of Princes having, by its statement of the 10th June, 1946 agreed that the Cabinet plan offered a fair basis for negotiations both as to the representation of the States in the Constituent Assembly and as to their ultimate position in the Union, set up a States Negotiation Committee for the purpose.[2] The Constituent Assembly also appointed a similar committee by its resolution dated the 21st December, 1946. The States Negotiation Committee held discussions with its British Indian counterpart on the 8th and 9th February and 1st and 2nd March, 1947.

On the 20th February, 1947 Mr. Attlee had announced in the House of Commons that transfer of power to a responsible Indian Government would be made by June, 1948. Lord Wavell resigned and Lord Mountbatten took over on the 24th March, 1947.

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1. Leonard Mosley; The Last Days of the British Raj, p.43
2. Mr. K.M.Panikkar, Foreign and Political Minister of Bikaner, represented Bikaner on this Committee.

The Maharaja, who was in Delhi, did not however attend the swearing in ceremony[1] but later in the day called on the Viceroy to explain his absence when he pointed out that the Nawab of Bhopal by his attitude towards the interim government was responsible for raising controversial issues in their ranks and expressed the belief that by the Maharaja's group[2] joining the Constituent Assembly, the new regime would be considerably strengthened.[3] The Nawab of Bhopal, the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes at the time, was insisting that no action should be taken by States individually but only collectively and by agreement with the Chancellor.[4] It may be noted that India's firm belief in secularism is seen in a glaring example of negotiations at the time of India's Independence being conducted by the three interested parties viz. the Congress, the Muslim League and the Indian States, by representatives who were all Muslims -Maulana Azad, spokesman for the Congress, Jinnah for the Muslim League and Nawab Hamidullah Khan for the princes.

During the meetings of the Princes Standing Committee held in Bombay in April, 1947 the agreements arrived at by the two negotiating committees (the States Negotiating Committee and its counterpart set up by the Constituent Assembly) were taken up for ratification and approved. However, a difference of opinion arose between the Chancellor and the Maharaja over the time when the States should join the Constituent Assembly. The Chancellor and the majority of the princes were in favour of the States entering the Constituent Assembly at a stage when the Union Constitution was being framed, whereas Maharaja Sadul Singh and his group were in favour of joining immediately.

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1. H.H.the Nawab of Bhopal also did not attend the ceremony.
2. Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Patiala and Gwalior.
3. Campbell; Mission with Mountbatten, p.44
4. Ibid, p. 47

Finding that it was not possible for him to make the princes realise the gravity of the problem, the Maharaja staged his historic walk-out leaving a note for the Chancellor wherein he asked to be excused for not remaining in the Standing Committee any longer as it would place him in an awkward position; he stated that his views on the problems then facing the rulers and the country at large were totally different from those of the Chancellor and the majority of the Standing Committee, and neither could he remain silent nor did he wish to speak anymore on his point of view which he had stressed many a time before Their Highnesses.[1]

The Maharaja issued an appeal to his brother princes the same day stressing that the only safe policy for the States was to work for the creation of as large a section of India as possible which would safeguard both the States and British India in the vacuum that would be created on the withdrawal of the British and which would maintain peace, order and good government and prevent civil strife. He added that a policy of "wait and see" if adopted by the princes would not be in conformity with their declared professions to help India to attain Independence. He, therefore, urged that the Princes should rise to the occasion and be hailed as co-architects of India's Independence and greatness.[2]

The Maharaja's walk out and appeal resulted in a compromise being worked out and ultimately it was decided that the States could join the Constituent Assembly at any stage after the Constituent Assembly had ratified the agreements arrived at between the two negotiating committees. This historic walk-out by the Maharaja broke "Bhopal's game" of evolving a third force and the action was not only acclaimed by all sections of the press[3] but was also eulogized by eminent British Indian leaders.

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 1320/XXI-A, Maharaja Sadul Singh's note dated 1.4.1947-
2. Maharaja Sadul Singh's secret appeal dated 1.4.1947
3. The Times of India, 2.4.1947 and 7.4.1947
   National Standard, 3.4.1947
   Bombay Sentinal, 3.4.1947
   Free Press Journal, 3.4.1947
   The Bombay Chronicle, 4.4.1947

Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel referred to the Maharaja as "one who has taken such a prominent part in the negotiations which preceded the entry of the princes into the polity of the Indian Union and who has stood by the country with steadfast loyalty."[1] And the first President of Independent India has referred to the Maharaja's patriotic move in glowing terms. He added:

> "The great move for the unification of India could materialise primarily because of the goodwill and ready willingness of princes like Maharaja Sadul Singhji to participate in Constitution making and to send their representatives to the Constituent Assembly of India. It was a difficult task, too difficult to be described in words because but for this kind of willful cooperation India might have remained split in several bits. It redounds to the credit of the late Maharaja of Bikaner that by his bold decision he gave a correct and timely lead to other princes. This eventually resulted in the accession of not only Bikaner but also other princely States to India. Therefore, India is, and will remain, indebted to him."
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> ".....When the history of that period is written, it will be recorded therein that at a time when India was faced on the one hand, with the calamity of partition and, on the other, with the dangerous possibility of Balkanisation Maharaja Sadul Singhji prompted by farsightedness and the most patriotic of motives stood firm like a rock and averted that possibility."[2]

Guided by the most patriotic of motives Maharaja Sadul Singh kept up his own plighted word of seeing India attain Independence as also provided the much needed courage to his wavering brother princes; he prevailed upon them from the very beginning, to cooperate to implement the Cabinet Mission plan to which the princes had already promised their support. The

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 1252/IX, Sardar Patel's letter dated 27.1.1950 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.
2. Dr. Rajendra Prasad's speech at Bikaner on 2.9.1954 when he came to unveil the statue of Maharaja Sadul Singh. This statue was historic, as immediately on the Maharaja's demise in 1950 and shortly after integration the people of Bikaner voluntarily and spontaneously raised funds amongst themselves and had this large equestrian statue sculptured and put up at a most commanding place in the city.

allegation of Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan that the stand taken up by the Maharaja was made under pressure was promptly contradicted by the Maharaja who affirmed that the decision taken by him was solely guided by patriotic motives and in the best interests of the nation.[1] His rejoinder was widely applauded by the press.[2] The representative of Bikaner, K.M.Panikkar, took his seat in the Constituent Assembly on the 28th April, 1947.[3]

Meanwhile a grave situation had developed in Kashmir. Sheikh Abdulla had started what is known as the Quit Kashmir movement with the result that he was arrested and a case was

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1. In his statement dated 24.4.1947 to the Associated Press of India, while replying to the allegation of Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan that the States had succumbed to the pressure of Congress, the Maharaja said -

   "I can say that so far as the Bikaner State is concerned and also the other States which have decided to participate in the work of the Constituent Assembly, we decided to do so certainly not due to any pressure of any one, much less the Congress, but because we consider it to be in our own best interests as well as in the greater interests of India. Apart from this, we were prompted entirely by motives of patriotism towards our mother country to do all we could to assist her at this critical moment when far-reaching decisions have to be promptly taken affecting both British India and the States."

2. Indian News Chronicle, 27.4.1947
   Lok Vani, 26.4.1947

3. V.P.Menon; The Story of the Integration of the Indian States, p. 76

   Later, Kr. Jaswant Singhji of Daudsar also represented Bikaner in the Constituent Assembly.
   Also a committee consisting of six members of the Bikaner Legislative Assembly was appointed to be closely associated with the State representative to the Constituent Assembly and keep in touch with its work. These were Pandit Badri Prasad Vyas, Thakur Heer Singh of Sankhu, Sardar Darbara Singh, Chaudhari Moti Ram, Seth Leharchand Sethia, and Sheikh Nisar Ahmad.

instituted against him[1]. Maharaja Sadul Singh, believing as he did in a strong and united India, tried to play his role in easing the situation in Kashmir, wrote to Mahatma Gandhi in June, 1947. Gandhiji, it was reported, was likely to go to Kashmir and the Maharaja suggested that the Mahatma may use his influence in persuading the Sheikh to retract from the position he had originally adopted. He further suggested that if that were not possible, compromise might be tried to prevail upon both the parties to let bygones be bygones and to start with a clean slate. The Maharaja stressed the exigencies of the times and the particular situation obtaining

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1. Sheikh Abdullah on his release from prison in 1964 was the first Indian politician of stature to raise doubts of accession of any Indian State to the Indian Union. The author in his capacity as a member of Parliament and the Maharaja of Bikaner pointed out in a statement released to the press that:

"there was no legal difference between the accession of Bikaner State and Jammu and Kashmir, because the moment the ruler signed the Instrument of Accession, it became 'complete and legally binding on both parties for all times'.

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The please sometimes put forward that the people of the former States have not been consulted at the time of accession is not correct, because in the Indian Independence Act, such a provision does not exist. What was envisaged was that, on the lapse of paramountcy, the ruler of each State was entitled to accede to either of the two newly created Dominions of India and Pakistan. This was the end of the matter'."

He also said that "from his personal experience he knew his father, Maharaja Sadul Singh, acceded to the Indian Union because he knew he carried with him the will of the million and a half people of the State" and that "the same applied to the hundreds of other States too," and he was sure "Kashmir was no exception."

The author added that "the very fact that Sheikh Abdullah himself made a passionate plea for the accession of Jammu and Kashmir State to India, and subsequently for help from the Government of India, set all doubts at rest."

in the country and advocated a compromise solution.[1] Mahatma Gandhi acknowledged the letter and wrote that if he went to Kashmir, he would keep his letter in mind.[2] This not only shows his strong sense of patriotism and duty by the country but also his friendly terms with those who were moulding the destiny of the country.

The gloomy prospect of partition stared India in the face. If the States chose to adopt any path other than that of cooperation following Mr. Attlee's announcement of the 20th February, 1947 regarding the lapse of paramountcy, the dangerous possibility of Balkanisation existed. The first step, therefore, taken by the new government was the creation, on the 5th July, 1947, of the States Department to conduct their relations with the Indian States.[3] Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was appointed Minister incharge of the department and he took V.P.Menon as his Secretary.[4] The immediate problem before the States Department was how to negotiate successfully with the princes in the short time available before the date for the declaration of Dominion Status. Sardar Patel was worried about it as it entailed starting negotiations with the princes all over again. But Mr. Menon at once set Sardar Patel's mind at ease by suggesting that the princes be asked to accede only in respect of three items, namely, Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Communications. Sardar Patel took the earliest opportunity to enunciate the policy of his department and appealed to the princes to accede on these three subjects of common interest and assured the princes that in other subjects their autonomous existence would be scrupulously respected. He further assured

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 914/XVIII, Maharaja Sadul Singh's letter dated 18.6.1947 to Mahatma Gandhi, Appendix XXXIV.
2. Ibid, Mahatma Gandhi's letter dated 19.6.1947 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.
3. White Paper on Indian States, p. 33
4. Ibid.
   Sardar Patel was to work in consultation with Sardar Abdul Rab Nishtar and Mr. Ikram Ullah was appointed Joint Secretary. The idea was that on the formation of the two Dominions of India and Pakistan, the department could easily be split up and continue to function in both the dominions without any dislocation.

them that it was not the desire of the Congress to interfere in any manner whatsoever with the domestic affairs of the States and that the policy of his department in conducting relations with the States would not be one of domination, and that they wished the princes well and were not their enemies.[1]

The Maharaja who realised the grave consequences if the princes decided to remain outside the Dominion of India,[2] immediately welcomed this announcement and said that he was whole-heartedly in agreement with it and that a statement showing greater goodwill and friendliness towards the States could hardly have been better. The Majority of the States had already joined the Constituent Assembly, but the Maharaja felt that the statement, coming as did at such a momentous juncture, would lead others to join at an early date. He urged his brother princes to grasp the hand of friendship so extended and give their full support to the Congress so that India might attain her goal quickly.[3]

The task of carrying out negotiations with the princes was entrusted to Lord Mountbatten who was the Crown representativ The Viceroy summoned a full meeting of the Chamber of Princes on the 25th July, 1947 at which the author was present as a spectator. The Viceroy, who was looking handsome in his naval uniform, made out a strong case for the States acceding to the appropriate Dominion in regard to the three subjects, assuring them at the same time that this would involve no financial liability and that there would be no further encroachment on their internal sovereignty. The Viceroy's persuasions

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1. Hindustan Times, 7.7.1947
2. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol.5,No.1-August 1947,pp.11-12; speech delivered by Maharaja Sadul Singh on 15.8.1947 at a State banquet to celebrate India's attainment of Independence:-
   "With the lapse of paramountcy it was open to the States of India to stand aside and refuse to associate with the new Dominion. Legally we could all have been independent today, for the suzerainty which we had surrendered to the British Crown had reverted to us under the Indian Independence Act and we could have stood aside and not accede to the Indian Dominion. A moment's consideration would show how disastrous the consequences would have been. It would have meant India breaking up into small fragments..... from the beginning my mind was made up. With full knowledge of its implications, I decided without hesitation to cooperate with those elements in India which were working for the establishment of a stable central government and oppose with determination any forces that might come in the way of such consummation."
3. Maharaja Sadul Singh's press statement dated 8.7.1947, Appendix XXXV.

succeeded and a majority of the princes signed the Instrument of Accession,[1] Maharaja Sadul Singh being the first to do so.[2] His services in uniting India were referred to in glowing terms by Sardar Patel while expressing his gratitude to the Maharaja for all the assistance and cooperation received from him. Sardar Patel added that at a time when the whole scheme was being sabotaged, it was the Maharaja of Bikaner who saved the situation by his unswerving loyalty to the cause of united India. He said -

> ".....Now that all the fully empowered States who were invited to accede to the Indian Dominion, have, with the exception of Hyderabad and Junagadh, signed the Instrument of Accession which was finalised by the Negotiating Committee of the Rulers and States' representatives, may I, on behalf of my colleagues, myself and the States Department, say how grateful we are for all the assistance and cooperation received from Your Highness during those difficult days. None knows better than Your Highness in what atmosphere we all had to work and what intrigues we had to encounter, not only from almost the whole of the outgoing Political Department, but also, I regret to say, from some of our own countrymen including members of the Princely Order and their ministers. Attempts were being made again and again, to sabotage the whole scheme and thus to give a death blow to our ideal of a strong, united and powerful India, but, fortunately for us all, those efforts failed, thanks to the unswerving loyalty to the cause of united India shown by Your Highness and other patriotic rulers and ministers of States. I am fully conscious of the trouble taken by you to dispel doubts and misgivings deliberately created to mislead the Princely Order. It indeed gives me pleasure to recall on this occasion the support then received from you....."
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> "....Also thanks for most valuable assistance and cooperation which I have received from you in my difficult task. Your lead has invariably been well times and effective."[3]

A Standstill Agreement which provided for the continuance, for the time being, of all subsisting agreements & administrative

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1. The Maharaja signed the Instrument of Accession on 7.8.1947
2. Leonard Mosley, Op.cit. p. 175 -
   "The first of them was the Maharaja of Bikaner who had once been an old friend of the Viceroy. He put his name to the papers with a dramatic gesture."
   V.P.Menon, however, mentions that the Maharaja of Baroda was the first to sign the Instrument of Accession.
3. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No: 1252/IX, Sardar Patel's letter dated 5.9.1947 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.

arrangements in matters of common concern to the State and the Dominion of India was also signed about the same time.[1]

The country-wide rejoicings on the attainment of Independence were celebrated with full enthusiasm in Bikaner on the 15th August, 1947. The flag hoisting ceremony was performed by the Maharaja personally at the Stadium. In the evening a State banquet was held at the Lallgarh Palace to celebrate the function at which Panikkar, while proposing the Maharaja's toast said: "we are all proud that the Maharaja has been one of the architects of the Independence of India."[2] The Maharaja in his reply said that the day's celebrations were in honour of a great and historic event and that he had done his duty to India, to the States as a whole and to his State and his beloved people.[3]

While Maharaja Sadul Singh accepted the assurances of Sardar Patel open heartedly, time was to prove that not all the assurances given by free India's representatives were to be honoured in the exact spirit in which they were made. Little did the Maharaja know of the future that was in store for the States. Perhaps he knew better than the others who were forced by circumstances to submit to the inevitable as will be seen later. At this stage the author was in very close contact with his father, the Maharaja, attending many important meetings with Indian leaders along with him and shared his genuine good faith in our leaders.

With the partition of Punjab, very vital interests of Bikaner were at stake. The Ferozepore Headworks controlled regulated supply of water to the Gang Canal. And if the Headworks went to Pakistan, it was apprehended that the interests

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1. K.M. Panikkar, Prime Minister, Bikaner, signed the Standstill Agreement on 7.8.1947, Appendix XXXVI.
2. Bikaner Bulletin, Vol. 5, No.1, August, 1947, p. 16; Panikkar's speech on 15.8.1947 while proposing the Maharaja's toast at the State banquet.
3. Ibid, p. 10; Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 15.8.1947 responding to the toast.

of the State in the waters of the Sutlej would be prejudicially affected. Thus when it became known through private sources that the Muslim League was likely to put forward claims for the control of regulation of waters from the Ferozepore Headworks, the Prime Minister of Bikaner addressed a letter to Sardar Patel apprising him of it and pointed out that by national partition, Ferozepore had definitely to be within the Indian area. He also added that over one thousand square miles of Bikaner territory was irrigated by the Sutlej Valley Canals and if the Muslim League's claims were accepted, the interests of the State would very much suffer. He, therefore, urged upon the Sardar both as the Minister incharge of the States Department as also Member of the High Council of Partition, to ensure that the Ferozepore Headworks were entirely controlled by India.[1] The Maharaja also sent telegrams to the Viceroy, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Patel on the 7th July, 1947 requesting that in the arrangements that were being made, it might be ensured that the interests of the Bikaner State were not interfered with and the rights of the State were adequately safeguarded as on these rights depended the entire economic position and prosperity of the State.[2] Sardar Patel replied that appropriate steps were being taken and assured the Maharaja that the mutual interest (of India and the Bikaner State) would be fully safeguarded.[3] The Viceroy asked the Maharaja by telegram to request the Punjab

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2696-B/LIV pt. II- Bhakra Dam Project; K.M.Panikkar's letter No. 464 C/386 dated 5.7.1947 to Sardar Patel.
2. Ibid, Telegrams dated 7.7.1947 from Maharaja Sadul Singh.
3. Ibid, Telegram dated 7.7.1947 from Sardar Patel to Maharaja Sadul Singh and letter dated 7.7.1947 from Sardar Patel to Mr. Panikkar.

Boundary Commission to afford the Bikaner State an opportunity to present its case, adding that in any case the Standstill Agreements entered into should provide sufficient safeguard till any modifications were agreed to by mutual agreements.[1] A telegram was sent, accordingly, to the President, Punjab Boundary Commission, Lahore in which he was also informed that Lala Kanwar Sain, Chief Engineer Irrigation of the State and Bakshi Tek Chand were being deputed to present the Bikaner case.[2] Soon after, a memorandum was presented to the Punjab Boundary Commission on the 25th July, 1947.[3]

The Viceroy wrote to the Maharaja on the 6th July, that he had met Panikkar, Bikaner's Prime Minister, and realised the difficulty about the repudiation of some of the administrative agreements with the States. He informed the Maharaja that a proviso had since been inserted in clause 7 of the Bill which met the point at issue.[4]

On news reaching the Maharaja that the Boundary Commission was likely to award Ferozepur Tehsil to Western Punjab, the Maharaja again telegraphed the Viceroy stressing the importance of retaining the Headworks at Ferozepur in India as the economic life of the State depended entirely upon it urging that his Prime Minister and Chief Engineer Irrigation, might be afforded an opportunity to place facts before the Viceroy.[5] It must be said to the credit of Lord Mountbatten especially, and to others concerned as well, that the efforts of Bikaner were finally crowned with success and a just cause upheld. Ferozepore remained in India.

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2696-B/LIV, pt. II-Bhakra Dam Project; Lord Mountbatten's telegram dated 17.7.1947 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.
2. Ibid, Maharaja Sadul Singh's telegram dated 18.7.1947 to the President, Punjab Boundary Commission, Lahore.
3. Ibid, Lala Kanwar Sain's note dated 26.7.1947
4. Ibid, Extract from Lord Mountbatten's letter of 6.7.1947 to the Maharaja as noted in Private Secretary's order No. 570-C dated 28.7.1947
5. Ibid, Maharaja Sadul Singh's telegram to Lord Mountbatten, dated 10.8.1947

And at midnight of the 14th August, 1947, India, after a long struggle, became a Dominion and attained freedom with Lord Mountbatten as its first Governor-General. Nehru reflected: "Long years ago we made a tryst with Destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom." [1]

Freedom for India was now an accomplished fact. The struggle for freedom had resulted in a bloodless transfer of power. The rejoicings, however, were to be short-lived. Communal hatred triggered off by Jinnah's Direct Action Day call,[2] a year earlier had lit the flame of communal bitterness in the sub-continent of India which was to take a toll of around one million men, women and children who were killed on both sides of the border. The partition of India which was based essentially on a two-nation theory necessarily implied exchange of population based on religion. Furthermore, the Muslims had been made to imbibe the notion that Pakistan was meant to be the land for Muslims alone. The result was that the exchange of population was made a very difficult task. In Pakistan, all sorts of tortures were being practised to force the minorities out. The migrants brought with them harrowing tales of horror and shame. A repercussion was only inevitable. The feelings of the Hindus and Sikhs in India were aroused to such a pitch that all the efforts of the Government of India which had secularism as its ideal, could not prevent retaliation. This resulted in unprecedented mass migration of Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan into India and of the Muslims to Pakistan.

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1. Campbell; Mission With Mountbatten, p. 157; Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's statement dated 14. 8. 1947 in the Constituent Assembly.

2. Leonard Mosley; The Last Days of the British Raj, pp.29, 32
"What we have done today is the most historic act in our history. Never have we in the whole history of the League done anything except by constitutional methods and by constitutionalism. But now we are obliged into this position This day we bid good-bye to constitutional methods -- today we have also forged a pistol and are in a position to use it."
---Jinnah.
"Blood-shed and disorder are not necessarily evil in themselv if resorted to for a noble cause" wrote Suhrawardy in an article in the Statesman of 5.8.1946

Bikaner, being the most strategically placed on the border and having a close on 200 mile long border along the newly formed State of Pakistan, was, with its sister State of Jodhpur which too had a large common border with Pakistan, ~~was~~ compelled by circumstances to help in this mass migration, struggling, with all the resources at its command, to give safe passage to fleeing humanity from both sides of the border without loss of life. This was indeed a very complicated task and it was only through the agency of a first-class administration imbued with the tradition of secularism, a tradition which the Bikaner State had maintained for five centuries, that close to seven or eight lacs of Muslims from British India were safely escorted through the State to Pakistan. This unprecedented exodus entailed heavy demand on the State transportation system as also on the administrative machinery.

Emotions were running high on both sides and the Maharaja rallied to the call of fleeing men, women, and children, irrespective of caste and community with a firm resolve to save as many lives as he possibly could. It, therefore, goes to the credit of both the Maharaja and his administration that the super-human task of protecting the millions crossing over from one country to another was accomplished with the least possible blood-shed when across the borders in British India as well as in Pakistan lives of the refugees had very little value. Arrangements[1] to combat this vast problem created many other problems in turn for the local residents of Bikaner as considerable accommodation and food had to be arranged for the refugees both coming into India from Pakistan and going from India to Pakistan, as most of the refugees came practically with no personal belongings. What made the task perhaps easy for the Bikaner State was that various communities in Bikaner

1. The details of the exodus of refugees and the arrangements made therewith are based on a statement of Kanwar Jaswant Singh of Daudsar who was looking after the arrangements at the time.

had lived in complete harmony for centuries and the communal hatred which had flared up in the rest of India did not affect the premier States of Rajputana to any appreciable extent.

When the exodus of Hindus started from Pakistan and came over to India, the Bikaner State was requested by the Government of India to receive them, if possible, as a temporary measure, till they were settled in due course of time. In some cases the refugees from Pakistan to India even arrived by air, sometime by special air lifts. As far as the Hindus directly entering Bikaner from Bhawalpur and nearby places were concerned, they were received with open arms; but there were other Hindus who had entered East Punjab, and who were to be temporarily accommodated, and the Bikaner State considered it its duty to cooperate with the Government of India and agreed to receive such Hindu refugees. Camps were opened for such refugees at a number of places. Kolayat,[1] where there were a large number of Dharamshalas, became one of the centres and the owners of Dharamshalas were prevailed upon to throw them open and put them at the disposal of the refugees. For food and other necessities of life, the Government of Bikaner made the fullest possible arrangements. Maharaja Sadul Singh even placed his own residence with its vast grounds at Sujangarh, at the disposal of the refugees from Pakistan.

When the refugees from Bhawalpur began to pour into the adjoining Ganganagar district and brought the heartrending tales of holocaust and carnage through which they had passed on their way to Bikaner State, the local Hindus and Sikhs were so enraged that they were preparing to retaliate. This informatic having been conveyed to the Maharaja, he immediately ordered

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1. The word 'Kolayat' is derived from 'Kapilayat'. The town of Kolayat is situated about 30 miles South-west of Bikaner. The village has a tank with Kapil Muni's temple on its bank. The tank is considered as sacred as ~~the~~ Pushkar near Ajmer and an annual fair is held in which people from all parts of the country come in thousands.

units of the Bikaner army to be sent to Ganganagar to see that none amongst his Muslim subjects were to be harmed.

When the exodus of Hindus from Bhawalpur in Pakistan assumed large dimensions and tales of horrors committed on them began to flow in, it was considered advisable by the Bikaner State that the Muslims who were settled all over the Gang Canal area for final transfer to Pakistan be concentrated at one or two places. In due course it was felt that it was impossible for the Muslims living in the border area to continue to stay there. They were advised to move over to Bhawalpur and safe passage under State military escort was guaranteed to them. As a result of strict vigilance by the State Government and its strict attitude in the matter, only one stray instance of assault took place. Beyond this single incident none other happened, and thousands of Muslims living on the border were given safe passage to Pakistan.

The general upheaval in the country was having repercussions in other parts of Bikaner where the Muslims were residing in large numbers. Mention may be made here of Churu[1] where the seths and Sahukars were having in their employment large number of Muslims. When the atmosphere was fouled by communal hatred, the seths and other responsible citizens of Churu started boycotting the Muslims. This made their life very difficult and, before going to Pakistan, they came in thousands to Bikaner to place their tale of woe before the Maharaja. He was greatly pained to learn that the majority community behaved in that manner. These thousands of Muslims of Churu were given shelter and food in Bikaner and a special department was opened to ensure that both the types of refugees i.e. Hindus and Muslims- Hindus from Pakistan and Muslims who came to Bikaner to migrate to Pakistan - were looked after at Bikaner camps. The Maharaja

1. Churu is situated at a distance of about hundred miles East of Bikaner. The town is a district headquarter and has a population of about forty thousand including many multi-millionaires. It is said that it was founded by a Jat named Chuhru about 1620. The town has many beautiful buildings and wells.

sent Kanwar Jaswant Singh, Public Works Minister, to Churu to persuade the Mahajans to take back the Muslims who had left, and see that they were not harrassed in any way. The Mahajans having acceded to the Maharaja's wishes the Muslim residents of Churu were sent back by special trains and their possessions restored.

Similarly at Anupgarh, a border Tehsil headquarter in the Ganganagar district, the Muslims wanted to continue to stay because their number there was a substantial one but the Hindus of the neighbouring villages, with the connivance of some narrow-minded officials, began to harrass them and leaving their properties behind, they also moved over to Bhawalpur, an area which was only six miles from Anupgarh in Bikaner State. Again Kanwar Jaswant Singh was deputed to assure the migrants that if they chose to come back to their homes, their safety would be fully secured and special army personnel would be detailed for the purpose; those officials who were found guilty were punished under the orders of the Maharaja. Meanwhile some local rowdy element in Sujangarh and the Hindu refugees from Pakistan indulged in some acts of rowdism as a result of which the local Muslim residents migrated to Ladnu and Jaswantgarh, border towns in Jodhpur State. On hearing this, the Maharaja immediately rushed senior officers and military units by special train to Sujangarh and order was restored. The Maharaja also pressed the Government of India to take back the Hindu refugees whose activities could not be tolerated by the Bikaner State, and losses suffered by the Muslims at their hands were compensated for.

A large number of Muslims from Bikaner State moved over to Pakistan under the illusion that they had found their homeland and heaven on earth. They had gone there against the advice of the Government of Bikaner who had ensured them complete protection if they wished to continue to stay . Soon after their arrival in Pakistan they were disillusioned and their life became miserable. On hearing their tales of

suffering, it was declared that they were welcome back home. As the parties returned to Bikaner they were resettled and those who had badly suffered were even given financial help, which, it is presumed, was possibly done nowhere else in India. The Bikaner State had to live upto its traditions of secularism and religious tolerance.

The Bikaner administration's efficiency in helping the migration of Muslims to Pakistan without loss of life had so impressed the other westward fleeing Muslims from the rest of India, who had gathered on the border of Bikaner, that they insisted on crossing over through the Bikaner State on account of the security of which they felt so assured. The Bikaner government with its experience of the situation guaranteed safe passage to the migrants. They were handed over at the State border; and it goes to the credit of Bikaner that lacs of people were safely escorted to the Pakistan border without any untoward incident.[1] When the communal holocaust began to subside in both countries, the Bikaner State could proudly look back with satisfaction on the major humanitarian task so well done. According to Kanwar Jaswant Singh, the Maharaja was congratulated for his great work by both the leaders of India as well as the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

It has already been stated in the previous chapter that in order to further lessen the sufferings of his people and to develop the State economically, Maharaja Ganga Singh had been strenuously trying for the materialisation of the Bhakra Dam Project. But, the project could not see the light of day during his life time. Maharaja Sadul Singh, with his burning desire for the well-being of his people, therefore, took up the task from where it was left by his great father. The attitude of the Punjab Government had changed again. It

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1. Leonard Mosley; Op.cit. p. 244
"600,000 dead, 14,000,000 driven from their homes, 100,000 young girls kidnapped by both sides, forcibly converted or sold on the auction block."

became known that the scheme of 1940 prepared by Rao Bahadur Khosla in which Bikaner was assured a definite share, was being discontinued. The Maharaja therefore addressed the Premier of the Punjab on the subject[1] only to hear in reply that there were so many claims to the waters of this project that its allocation presented some difficulty.[2]

The Maharaja also wrote to and met Sir Evan Jenkins, the Governor of the Punjab but with no satisfactory results. On the contrary the Punjab Government opposed the giving of water from the Bhakra Dam to the Bikaner State. The Maharaja thereupon took up the matter with Sardar Patel, Shri Gadgil and the Union Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. At one of the meetings with Pandit Nehru in this connection, the author accompanied the Maharaja, his father. As a result of these efforts he was assured by the Union Prime Minister that he was convinced that the Bikaner State should have its share in the Bhakra Dam project and that he would do everything in his power to see that it was done.[3] Though the benefits could not be reaped during the Maharaja's life time, it is however a great consolation that his efforts and the efforts of his father, Maharaja Ganga Singh, as a result of due and sympathetic consideration by the Central and Provincial governments, were ultimately crowned with success and today the water is already flowing in a part of the Canal. It may, however, be mentioned here that whereas the 1939 scheme envisaged to command an area of 12 lakh acres, the area which is now actually to benefit by this project will be only 4,17,000 acres.

In 1948, a few months after the attainment of Independence by India, Lord and Lady Mountbatten visited Bikaner when the Governor-General took the opportunity to invest Maharaja Sadul Singh with the insignia of the Grand Commander of the Most

1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 2696-B/LIV, part II- Maharaja Sadul Singh's letter dated 5.10.1946 to Sir Khizar Hyat Khan.
2. Ibid, Sir Khizar Hayat Khan's letter No. 71-PM, dated November, 1946 to the Maharaja.
3. Ibid, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's letter dated 12.7.1948 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.

Exalted Order of the Star of India. This was perhaps the last of the formal functions held in Bikaner in honour of a representative of the King, in India. Maharaja Sadul Singh and Lord Mountbatten had known each other since childhood and welcoming the distinguished visitor the Maharaja referred to their early acquaintance, adding that whatever the relations of India and England might be, he was confident that their personal friendship would continue to the last. Both Maharaja Sadul Singh and Lord Mountbatten had served together on the staff of the Prince of Wales, later King Edward VIII, when he visited India in 1922. The two had in the intervening period, kept in close touch and addressed each other intimately by their first-names, Lord Mountbatten referring to the Maharaja as 'Hiru' which was the pet name given to him by Maharaja Ganga Singh, and the Maharaja referring to Lord Mountbatten as 'Dicky'. This personal friendship developed further during the viceroylty of Lord Mountbatten.[1]

In his reply to the welcome speech, Lord Mountbatten spoke of the Maharaja as being one of his lifelong friends, the friendship having first been formed when the Maharaja was five and he, seven. And referring to the period of his viceroylty, he said that almost the first official interview he had on arrival in India was the one with the Maharaja in March, 1947 adding that the wise, cooperative and helpful attitude the Maharaja then displayed gave him a new confidence about a satisfactory solution of fitting the States into the future set up of India.[2] In the Viceroy's own words -

> "His Highness was the first ruler who realised the part which the princes could play in the future by sending

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1. Maharaja Sadul Singh's speech dated 15.1.1948 -
   ".....I have alluded to my lifelong friendship with Lord Mountbatten. It was when he and I were no more than children playing with toys that we were thrown together and, if I may say so, the affection and friendship that happily have developed between us have only increased with years. I have no doubt that whatever the political relations of our country with England, and I myself feel confident that they will be of the most intimate character, our personal friendship will continue to the end of our lives."
2. Lord Mountbatten's speech at the Investiture Darbar at the Lallgarh Palace, Bikaner, on 15.1.1948.

representatives to the Constituent Assembly to help frame the new constitution of India. Likewise His Highness was the first ruler to support my proposals for obtaining the accession of States to their neighbouring Dominion."

"It must be remembered that on the day of transfer of power the tie that previously held the States to British India was removed; for that tie had depended on the paramountcy of the British Crown. On that day I gave up two entirely separate functions, namely, that of Viceroy and that of Crown Representative. In the first capacity I dealt with States; and it was a fact that both these offices were always held by one and the same man that had really linked the States with British India. With the disappearance of both these offices, India was in imminent danger of fragmentation."

".....the statesmanship and patriotism displayed by the Maharaja of Bikaner in giving a lead in announcing his accession to the Dominion of India without a moment of doubt or suspicion, cannot therefore be praised too highly."

"My Government have been particularly appreciative of His Highness' statesmanlike actions, and I am more than delighted that His Majesty the King, in view of these actions as well as the past record of His Highness, was pleased to make him a Knight Grant Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India."[1]

Lord Mountbatten's visit ended with an informal Imperial Sand grouse shooting camp at Gajner which was greatly enjoyed by the Viceroy who himself is a fine shot. Lord Mountbatten was accompanied by Lady Mountbatten, and his two daughters, Lady Petricia Brabourne and Lady Pamela Mountbatten.[2]

Soon after, a great calamity befell the Nation. Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation, was shot dead on the 30th January, 1948 and the whole country was suddenly plunged into grief. As soon as the Maharaja heard of the tragic news, he

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1. Lord Mountbatten's speech at Bikaner, dated 15.1.1948
2. Bikaner's Imperial sandgrouse shoot has become world famous and every new Viceroy during the period of Maharaja Ganga Singh and Maharaja Sadul Singh, visited Bikaner for a grouse shoot at Gajner, only 21 miles away from Bikaner where a lake like an 'Oasis' exists with beautiful palaces and a large wild game preserve. It was once wittily remarked "Bikaner by the grace of Grouse" had achieved so much progress. The Prince of Wales, later King Edward the VIII, King George V and King George VII all of them had visited Bikaner and shot grouse as guests of Maharaja Ganga Singh. It was not an uncommon sight to see as many as 200 important foreign and Indian guests coming every year to take part in these famous shoots. Maharaja Ganga Singh was able to use these precious contacts for the betterment of the Bikaner

sent many telegrams of condolence, including those to Lord Mountbatten, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and others. He also immediately sent telegraphic instructions to his Master of the Household Lt. Col. Thakur Kishan Singh and to Capt. K.P.U.Menon, Foreign & Political Secretary, Government of Bikaner, who were in Delhi at the time to represent him at the funeral functions. Besides, he ordered State mourning[1] and the holding of mass prayers at the Stadium at 4.00 p.m. on the 31st January, 1948. The Maharaja led the prayers personally and was visibly moved. On this occasion the Maharaja wore a white turban, a symbol of mourning and which is only worn by the ruler in the case of the death of an elder in the immediate members of the family, and never otherwise. This departure from custom shows the veneration with which Gandhiji was held by Maharaja Sadul Singh and the people of Bikaner.

The accession of the Indian States to the Dominion of India having been secured as a first step, the Government of India now launched upon a programme of complete integration on the ground that the people of Indian States desired to achieve the same measure of freedom as the people in the provinces enjoyed. This desire, it was said, was abundantly clear in the various political movements which found momentum in the States. Another reason advanced was that the rulers of the smaller States were not in a position to bring about the desired administrative reforms for want of resources to maintain the requisite machinery. The position therefore, resolved into grouping them into sizeable units by merging them with either the neighbouring provinces, or converting them into centrally administered areas.[2] With the passage of time, the process was

1. Bikaner Rajpatra dated 31.1.1948
2. Immediately after the integration of the Indian States, the new States Unions were formed into what was known as the Part B States. Rajasthan remained a part B State under a Rajpramukh for some years when the Rajpramukh was replaced by a Governor and Rajasthan and some other Unions raised on par with Part A States. There was also a third category of Part C States e.g. Tripura, Ajmer and even the Union of Himachal Pradesh. These part C States were centrally administered.

extended to encompass the major States as well by creating new viable units by the formation of Unions of States.[1] A special feature of these Unions was the provision for a Rajpramukh as the constitutional head of the State and in many cases made for life time later on. The successor to the life Rajpramukh was to be elected by the Council of Rulers. But the institution did not last long.

This was going back upon the solemn assurances given at the time the accession of the States was sought for. The tide of times had changed. The process of integration started avowedly with the consent of the princes, but a consent which circumstances did not permit them to withhold. In this connection it is interesting to note the views of the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi, who once said that "when Swaraj is attained, there will be a relation of mutual aid and cooperation, and destructive conflict will be a thing of the past. British India under Swaraj will not wish for the destruction of the Indian States but will be helpful to them."[2]

Even the eighteen States[3] which the Government of India had at first declared as those satisfying the conditions as viable units of the Indian union and whose names were listed in the relevant schedule of the Draft Constitution[4] placed before the Constituent Assembly, ultimately lost their separate entity as the process of integration and merger progressed and in good time before the Constitution was adopted.

During the year 1948, Maharaja Sadul Singh had to visit Delhi very frequently, almost every month and on many of these occasions the author also accompanied him. Some of these visits were in response to the call of the Viceroy and on some of these occasions he even sent his plane to fetch the Maharaja. One

1. White Paper on Indian States, pp.175-77
   Sardar Patel's statement of 16.12.1947; also pp.38-39.
2. M.K.Gandhi; The Indian States Problem, pp. 9-10
3. Bikaner was one of the eighteen viable States.
4. Kanwar Jaswant Singh of Daudsar's affidavit.

such occasion which the author distinctly remembers was in May 1948 when the party accompanying Maharaja Sadul Singh was fairly large and two aeroplanes had to be used. Another occasion was in June 1948 in connection with the enquiry into allegations against the ruler of Faridkot when the rulers of Gwalior, Bikaner, Jaipur and Patiala had been called to Delhi for the purpose. The author distinctly remembers this meeting at which C.Rajgopalachari, the Governor-General designate was present during the meetings, Maharaja Sadul Singh had raised the point that neither the Governor-General, nor anybody else could arrest the ruler of Faridkot unless he was deposed.

The process of integration began with the rulers of the Chhatisgarh and Orissa States ceding to the Dominion Government full and exclusive authority, jurisdiction and powers for and in relation to the governance of their States by agreements signed on the 14th December, 1947 and subsequent dates. The administration of these States was made over to the Governments of the Central Provinces and Orissa on the 1st January, 1948.[1] In view of the adverse press criticism of the policy of merger of the States Ministry, V.P.Menon was sent by Sardar Patel to go and see Gandhiji and Pandit Nehru and convince them of the justice of the action taken. According to Mr. Menon, Gandhiji "professed himself entirely satisfied".[2] This action on the part of the Dominion Government naturally created apprehensions in the minds of the rulers and when some of them met Lord Mountbatten at a conference on the 7th January, 1948, this question was raised. Maharaja Sadul Singh was also present at the conference. During the conference, V.P. Menon pointed out that the principle of merger would not be applied to those States which had individual representation in the Constituent Assembly.[3] And yet what followed soon belied these professions.

1. White Paper on Indian States, pp.40-41
2. V.P.Menon; The Story of the Integration of the Indian States, p. 163
3. Ibid, p. 164.

The Indian States fell into three distinct categories. There were old established States which were in existence before the Muslim or British rule in India. Another class consisted mainly of the States with Muslim dynasties which were formed by the nobles or viceroys of the foreign rulers. The third category consisted of the newer States, which the British recognised during the final stages of the consolidation of their power. Bikaner belonged to the first category.

Rajputana consisted mostly of the old established States which had treaties of mutual amity and defensive alliance with the Paramount British Power. It may be recalled that there were only forty States altogether throughout India which had entered into such treaties with the Paramount Power. Therefore it was natural that the shock of the policy of the new Government of hastening integration and merger was indeed great. Rajputana too could not escape this process which was rapidly growing. Its integration was completed in four stages.

The first united State of Rajasthan,[1] consisting of nine[2] smaller States in the south-east was inaugurated on 25th March, 1948 with Maharao Bhim Singh of Kota[3] as the Rajpramukh and Kota as the capital of the union. Shortly afterwards, Maharana Bhupal Singh of Mewar (Udaipur), the ruler of a most ancient and senior-most State in Rajputana and a viable one, expressed willingness to join the Rajasthan union and this second Rajasthan union was inaugurated on 18th April, 1948 with the Maharana of Mewar[4] as the Rajpramukh during his life time and the Maharao of Kota as the senior Up-Rajpramukh. Udaipur became the capital of the new union.

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1. White Paper on Indian States, p. 53
2. Banswara, Bundi, Dungarpur, Jhalawar, Kishangarh, Kota, Partabgarh, Shahpura and Tonk.
3. Maharao Bhim Singh of Kota is married to the author's aunt and daughter of Maharaja Ganga Singh.
4. The author's sister is married to the present Maharana Bhagwati Singhji of Udaipur who succeeded to the gaddi of Mewar on the demise of Maharana Bhupal Singh.

The four States of Alwar, Bharatpur, Dholpur and Karauli were integrated into a new union known as the Matsya Union and it was inaugurated on 18th March, 1948. The Maharana of Dholpur became the Rajpramukh of Matsya Union and Bharatpur the capital. On 15th May, 1949 the Matsya Union was integrated with Greater Rajasthan.

The three old established major and viable States of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner, together with the ancient State of Jaisalmer, stood out till the last.[1] The Ministry of States therefore, soon initiated negotiations for the merger of these major and viable States for the formation of a Greater Rajasthan union. The negotiations were protracted, several meetings took place jointly and severally between the three rulers and V.P. Menon, representative of the Ministry of States, at Delhi, Bikaner, Jaipur and Jodhpur. The author was present at most of these meetings. It soon became apparent that the merger was inevitable and in the hope that this would be in the interests of the people of the States and the greater good of the country these four rulers agreed to form the greater Rajasthan union. On the 14th January, 1949 Sardar Patel announced at a public meeting at Udaipur that the rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner had agreed in principle to integration.[2] The Greater Rajasthan union was inaugurated on March 30, 1949 by Sardar Patel. The Maharana of Udaipur became the Maha-Rajpramukh for life- a functionless post specially created for the Maharana, Jaipur the Rajpramukh[3] for life; Maharao Bhim Singh of Kota the Senior Up-Rajpramukh, the Maharajas of Jodhpur and Bundi being the other Up-Rajpramukhs. Neither of the Junior

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1. V.P.Menon; The Story of the Integration of the Indian States, p. 250 -

   "The rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Bikaner were keen to preserve the identity of their States but bigger States than theirs had been either merged with provinces or formed into unions and it was difficult to leave them alone."

2. Ibid, p. 251.
3. The Rajpramukh was also the Commander-in-Chief of the Rajastha forces. The institution of Rajpramukhship ended and with that the Council of Rulers came to an end in Rajasthan. Until the abolition of Rajpramukh and Rajasthan being raised to a Part A status, the Rajpramukh convened yearly meetings of the Rajasthan rulers. The legal position of the Council of rulers is very much doubtful because the covenants lay down the formation of such a union but no subsequent withdrawal of this Council has taken place. No meetings have,however, been convened of the Council, nor has a president been elected since the post of Rajpramukh ended.

Up-Rajpramukhs, however, took the oath of office. Jaipur became the capital of the United State of Rajasthan. The Rajasthan union for strange reasons started off with two serious aeroplane accidents involving the key figure in this drama, the Maharaja of Jaipur just a few weeks before the integration t of Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer into Greater Rajasthan, when he was nearly killed and his plane destroyed, and the force-landing by Sardar Patel who accompanied the Maharaja of Jodhpur in an Air-force plane, on a river bed, and narrowly escaped injuries while on their way to inaugurate the Greater Rajasthan union. On the 7th April, 1949 the administration of the Bikaner State was handed over to the new Government of Rajasthan[1] when a cash balance of Rs.4.87 crores[2] was transferred to the newly formed United State of Rajasthan, this being the highest amount amongst all the States of Rajasthan. Besides, all the assets of the Bikaner State Railway were made over and these included in particular the transfer of about nine crore worth of railway line and rolling stock to the Central Government.

The Instruments of Merger and the Covenants while providing for the transfer of power from the rulers to the Rajpramukh, also provided for the retention by them of their private properties and guaranteed to them succession to their gaddis, the enjoyment of their rights and privileges and a privy purse as fixed upon for them and their successors.[3] Steps were

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1. Prime Minister Bikaner's office file No. 49 of 1948 (in the Rajasthan State Archives, Bikaner), telegram dated 7.4.1949 from the Maharaja (at Bombay) to the Rajpramukh, Jaipur -

   "In accordance with article six of the Covenant for the reconstitution of the United State of Rajasthan I hand over to Your Highness the administration of the Bikaner State with effect from the 7th April, 1949"

2. The cash balances transferred by some premier States were - (1) Bikaner 4.87 crores; (2) Jodhpur 4.75 crores; (3)Jaipur 4.58 crores; (4) Kota 3.34 crores; (5) Udaipur (figures not available).

3. Letters of succession and fixing of Privy Purse on the author's succession to the gaddi might be of interest, Plate XXXVIII and Plate XXXIX.

taken to define the private properties of the rulers as distinct from those of the State's and to fix the privy purses. The principle adopted for the settlement of private properties was that the list of private properties prepared by the ruler was discussed round the table between him, the Rajpramukh (in the case of States forming unions) or a representative of the provincial government (in the case of those States merged with the Provinces) and a representative of the States Ministry, and a settlement arrived at in a spirit of compromise with due regard to the safeguarding of public interests.[1] In the case of Bikaner a list of the private properties so agreed upon to be retained by the Maharaja was received from the States Ministry by their letter dated 17.2.1949 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.

Regarding the privy purse which is in the nature of consideration for surrender of ruling powers,[2] it was worked out on a uniform principle of 15 per cent on the first lakh of average annual revenue, 10 per cent on the next four lakhs and 7½ per cent above five lakhs subject to a maximum of ten lakhs per annum.[3] The only exceptions made were in the cases

1. White Paper on Indian States, pp.63-64
2. Ibid, pp. 123-24
3. The rulers whose Privy Purses at the time of merger were fixed at 10 lakhs and above are as under:-

   Hyderabad (50.00); Baroda (26.50); Mysore (26.00); Gwalior (25.00);Mewar (20.00); Travancore (18.00); Jaipur (18.00);Jodhpur(17.50); Bikaner (17.00) Patiala(17.00) Indore (15.00); Bhavnagar (10.00); Bhopal (11.00); Kohlapur (10.00)Nawanagar (10.00); Rewa (10.00).

   The Privy Purses fixed for the Rajasthan rulers were (figures in lacs) -

   Alwar (5.20); Bharatpur(5.02); Dholpur (2.64); Karauli(1.05); Banswara (1.26); Bundi (2.81); Dungarpur (1.98); Jhalawar (1.36); Kishangarh (1.36); Kota (7.00); Mewar (20.00); Partabgarh (1.02); Shahpura (0.90); Tonk(2.78); Jaipur(18.00) Jodhpur (17.50); Jaisalmer (1.80); Bikaner(17.00); Lawa(0.125

   The amount of 20 lakhs fixed for the Maharana of Mewar is composed of Rs.5,00,000 for charitable purposes and Rs.5,00,000 for Rajpramukhship and Rs.10,00,000 as Privy Purse.

of certain large and viable States where a higher sum was fixed in excess of 10 lacs and that too only for the life time of the ruler signing the merger agreement, whereafter the amount being reducible to ten lakhs for his successor.[1] As Bikaner was a large and viable unit, the Maharaja's Privy Purse was fixed at 17 lakhs and 10 lacs for his successors.[2]

And thus the curtain was rung down on the five century old history of Bikaner during which not only the most cordial relations existed between the House of Bikaner and the Central Powers but also the last two rulers played an important role for the attainment ~~of~~ by India of her full stature in the comity of Nations of the world and the unification of our country. This noble cause taken up by Maharaja Ganga Singh at a time when no other prince could have done it, and fighting for it whenever and wherever an opportunity offered itself, was nobly

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1. White Paper on Indian States, p. 121

2. Since Bikaner was the first State where a ruler (Maharaja Sadul Singh) passed away on 25.9.1950 after the integration it may be of interest to read the letter of the President of India recognizing the succession to the gaddi of the Bikaner State. The amount of Privy Purse of Rs.17 lakhs drawn by Maharaja Sadul Singh was according to the terms of settlement, reduced to Rs.10 lacs. This was also the first instance when any ruler receiving a Privy Purse of more than ten lacs had passed away after the integration and the privy purse cut from a higher amount to rupees ten lacs. The White Paper, however, shows that the privy purse of some rulers who were in receipt of privy purse in excess of ten lacs was to be fixed at a later date. Further, it is understood from usage and the large number of cases of rulers who have passed away since the integration and who were the recipients of a privy purse higher than ten lakhs, in all these cases the privy purse has been cut down to ten lacs. However, in the case of Nizam of Hyderabad, the privy purse of his grandson has been fixed at Rs.20 lakhs in 1964. Appendices XXXVIII and XXXIX.

continued by Maharaja Sadul Singh. He not only gave his unstinted support to every measure that went to speed up the achievement of the goal but also by his exhortations and actions induced the wavering princes, and compelled those scheming, to fall in line with the changing times, and extend their cooperation to Indian freedom fighters, thus helping in the maintenance of the solidarity of the country when it was faced with "partition on the one hand, the possibility of Balkanisation on the other." [1] No wonder then that his patriotic sentiments and actions received full praise not only from leaders like Dr. Rajendra Prasad, India's first President, and Sardar Patel but also from the first Governor-General of free India, Lord Mountbatten. These facts were also duly acclaimed in the press in general. It is a matter of much pride for the House of Bikaner that the patriotism of its rulers was perhaps unrivalled at a time when the drama of India's independence was being enacted on the Indian political arena.

With the extinction of the sovereignty of the Bikaner State, its armed forces were necessarily integrated in those of the Indian Union, Rajasthan States being grouped together temporarily. Bikaner has always been very proud of its State forces. Some of the finest fighting men both in the States forces as also in the Indian Army have hailed from the Bikaner State and from Rajputana. A large number of soldiers hailing from some of the toughest fighting stock, as for example the Rajputs, Jats and Kyamkhanis came from the Bikaner State.

Without a first-class fighting force it would not have been possible for the Bikaner State to exist. Ever since the treaty of 1818 the Bikaner State forces began gradually to be modernised as a result of the impact of the British. The many excursions carried out by the British forces in suppressing

1. Dr. Rajendra Prasad's speech dated 2.9.1954 while unveiling the Equestrian statue of Maharaja Sadul Singh at Bikaner.

lawlessness in Bikaner left their indelible imprint on the military administration of Bikaner. The British encroachment on the States implied a greater control over the armed forces of the States, as was expected. On a large number of occasions the Bikaner State forces fought side by side with the British such as the Mutiny, China War, Boer War, Somaliland campaign, World War I, and World War II. This further helped to improve the States forces and put them on a modern footing. In the time of Maharaja Ganga Singh, the Bikaner forces became one of the finest fighting body of all the States forces. Maharaja Ganga Singh himself a full Honorary General in the Indian Army often proudly led the parades of his State forces as the commander.

The Ganga Risala[1]- the Camel Corps- perhaps the only one of its kind, barring the Ganga Jaisalmer Risala, a much later offshoot of the Ganga Risala itself,[2] was earmarked for service ex-State. Nevertheless, there always remained a desire to keep the remaining troops in the State, always ready to form a reserve unit in case of need.

The Maharaja always stressed the great need to have a liaison between the State forces and the Indian Army and the Foreign & Political Department, and it was always his desire never to let the Army Department of the Government of India to directly control the Bikaner State forces. In regard to sentences and other penalties to be imposed and confirmed by the Viceroy and the King Emperor on the personnel of the Indian and the British army, the Maharaja maintained that as far as the States forces were concerned, the power of imposing similar sentences lay with the rulers of the States.

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1. The Ganga Risala was reorganised in 1889 under the orders of Maharaja Ganga Singh and was accepted as Imperial Service troops by the Government of India. It then had a strength of five hundred. It served on active service in Somaliland from 1902-1904, in the Great War from 1914-19, in the second World War from 1940-42. In 1951 it was converted into 13th Grenadiers by amalgamating the Jaisalmer Risala with it.
2. Both regiments merged int one forming Ganga Risala and now a most photogenic spectacle on all Republic Day parades.

Maharaja Ganga Singh always stressed the necessity of having most modern and efficient armament in the Bikaner State forces so that it could serve the empire efficiently. He advocated the supply of modern artillery guns which at that time were not allowed even to the Indian army manned by the Indians. The Bikaner State was the only State, except Kashmir where the artillery was allowed on account of the strategic position of the State, to have an artillery unit. The Patiala State followed thereafter in having an artillery. The Maharaja further stressed that the Bikaner State forces and for that matter Indian States forces may be governed by their own local army rules which for all purposes would include the clauses mutatis mutandis of the Indian Army Act and the Army Act. The British Government, of course, never allowed the repairing of the armament workshops in the States which would have helped the States forces to supplement the production of arms in times of need.

After the termination of World War I, it was considered by the officers of the Army Headquarters on the one hand and the princes on the other that the Indian States forces would have more successfully contributed and displayed their effectiveness on the field of war had they been efficiently organised. The princes, of course, were free only to maintain troops in so far as they did not seriously affect their financial position. They could be organised chiefly for service, internal security and reserve. The princes were not given the option to disband or increase their armed forces without informing the Army Headquarters. The reason for this was that it would disturb the strength of the Indian Army as a whole, for internal security purposes. The Military Adviser-in-Chief worked as a liaison officer between the Indian States Forces and Indian Army through the Foreign & Political Department in all matters, such as, training, supply of arms and ammunition.

In 1949 when the Bikaner State merged with Rajasthan, the

total strength of the Bikaner State forces stood at 3500. It was indeed a matter of much regret to all those concerned that soon after integration of the States of Rajputana, the integration of the various States Forces also took place. The fine fighting men of the States forces received a shabby deal. As a first step the Rajpramukh of the Rajasthan State was made the Commander-in-Chief of the States forces. The first senior most officer next to the Rajpramukh was General Jai Deo Singh General Officer Commanding of the Bikaner State forces. Furthermore when it was decided to amalgamate the Rajasthan forces with the India army in 1951, the strength of these forces was reduced and a good many of the personnel discharged on the pretext of medical fitness, Looking to this in retrospect, on the recent Chinese invasion of India, one may aver that that band of fine fighting soldiers could have stood India in good stead to defend the borders.

For some reason or other, the Indian army decided that the length of the service of the officers of the States forces should be reduced for purposes of fixing seniority or promotions in the Indian Army. While this may have been reasonable in the case of smaller States whose armed forces were not kept at par with that of Indian army, in the cases of other States like Bikaner, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Hyderabad, Patiala, Jaisalmer, Kota and Udaipur who had first-rate troops, this was unfortunate. Many of the officers so absorbed in the Indian Army were consequently low graded and had to suffer financial loss. This was a matter of much heart burning both for the States which were integrated and for the personnel affected. As a result of this merger of the Rajasthan forces with the Indian Army, the Rajpramukh also ceased to be the Commander-in-Chief of the Rajasthan forces.

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1. Trachoma, a common eye disease in Rajasthan, was treated as one of the disqualifications for the armed personnel and they were discharged on that ground.

In order to appreciate this second phase of wiping off the entity of Indian States in the name of unification of India it is necessary to go back a little and examine the working of the minds of those at the helm of affairs in the States Department. When Sardar Patel was sceptical about the rulers of the Indian States agreeing to accede to the Indian Union and expressed his doubts about the same to V.P. Menon, he at once pointed out that the rulers could not refuse to accede. Menon's contention was that lapse of paramountcy was a blessing in disguise for India because with it ended the many privileges which the princes enjoyed under the various treaties and engagements and which carried with them certain obligations which they would have been obliged to honour if paramountcy had been transferred to them. According to him they were now free. He even told the Sardar that in case of political or communal agitation in the States or in case of the people rising up and demanding freedom or to join India or in case of popular agitation beginning to threaten the rule and even the lives of the rulers, who else would they have to look up to for protection other than the Indian Government. He said that it was now their turn to say how the princes behaved.[1] And the Sardar was not slow to catch the point, which in plainer words meant that any of these conditions could be created to achieve the desired end. And instances are not wanting; when the Dewan of Travancore came to inform the Viceroy that the Maharaja of Travancore wished to proclaim his State's independence, the Viceroy asked him to see V.P.Menon who immediately reminded the Dewan of his State being a breeding place of communism and under the circumstances, if anything happened, the Government of India would not be able to come forward with help. The events proved it to be correct. The Working Committee of the State Congress Committee immediately organised demonstrations against the Maharaja of Travancore, the Dewan was stabbed and seriously wounded and the Maharaja

1. Leonard Mosley; Op.cit., pp. 169-70

of Travancore soon signed the Instrument of Accession.[1] Jodhpur is another glaring example. On learning that the Maharaja of Jodhpur had met Mr. Jinnah and was toying with the possibilities of opting for Pakistan, V.P.Menon at once went to see the Maharaja at his hotel in Delhi and took him to the Viceroy's House where he was "carolled" by the Viceroy and he ultimately agreed to sign the Instrument of Accession.[2] The Nawab of Bhopal and the Maharaja of Mysore had been marking time till the last but ultimately gave in.

Thus, when soon after the States had acceded to the Indian Union, in respect of the three subjects of common concern, namely, Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Communications, the curtain was lifted for the second act of complete merger of over five hundred States. A lurking doubt was created in the minds of the people if the builders of free India were completely honest with the rulers and whether they did not actually negotiate accession as a first step with mental reservation. The argument that the smaller States could not have a high administrative efficiency as required by the people after Independence, and hence that there should be a move to merge the smaller States into groups, or with the adjoining provinces, or into centrally administered areas, was understandable. In fact Maharaja Sadul Singh had advocated the formation of sizeable units of States much earlier so that they could keep themselves abreast with administrative reforms. It was indeed a great pity that his advice had not been heeded in time. The question of the merger of larger viable units, however, was a different matter.

The two issues of accession and merger should never be confused. Accession of the States meant bringing into India under one flag nearly 1/3rd more of India at a time when a

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1. Leonard Mosley; Op.cit. pp. 174 and 176.
2. Ibid, pp.176-80

third force was possible and the Centre was somewhat weak due to transfer of power from British to Indian hands and due to the upheaval caused by partition. Maharaja Sadul Singh's strong lead to bring about accession was thus a most patriotic move. The merger issue, however, was an entirely different proposition as this envisaged boundary changes within the country with the head of State from a ruler changing over to a life Rajpramukh. In fact the question of monarchical governments continuing as constitutional heads had been accepted in principle subject to the people's approval by all the Freedom fighter leaders including Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel.

Incidentally it may be mentioned here that in anticipation of the events to follow as a necessary consequence of partition, the Nawab of Loharu had entered in June 1947 into administrative arrangements with the Bikaner State with the concurrence of the Crown Representative. These arrangements continued till some time after partition, and during the chaos that prevailed in the country immediately on partition as a resultant mass exodus of minorities from one dominion to the other, the State of Loharu and its people were afforded full protection by Bikaner. In December, 1947 when the question of merger of smaller States arose, the Nawab of Loharu expressed a desire for the merger of Loharu with the Bikaner State. On the matter being referred to the States Ministry it was stated that it had no objection and that negotiations could be continued. But in January, 1948 when Mr. Panikkar, Prime Minister of the Bikaner State, went to Delhi, the agreement of the State Ministry to the proposals taken by him was not readily available and he advised the Maharaja to take up the matter personally with them when he next visited Delhi. The Maharaja visited Delhi on the 7th February, 1948 and spoke about the matter to Sardar Patel who said that he had no objection to the merger of Loharu with Bikaner, but added that a section of the people of Loharu did not want it, and therefore, could not be agreed to. The Maharaja thereupon

pointed out that it was only a small section of the people which was opposed to the proposed merger but agreed to wait and see which way the public opinion drifted. The next morning, on the 8th February, 1948, the Maharaja apprised V.P.Menon of the talks that he had with the Sardar and Mr. Menon assured him that no action would be taken regarding the merger of Loharu without consulting him.

The Maharaja left for Bikaner the same day by plane just before lunch and by 3.00 p.m. i.e. within a few hours the Nawab of Loharu who was in Delhi, was presented for signatures a draft letter by C.C. Desai, a senior Secretary in the States Ministry, to the effect that the Nawab agreed to hand over the administration of his State to the Central Government. The Nawab returned to Bikaner on the 11th February, 1948 and explained the whole position to the Maharaja who immediately wrote a letter to Sardar Patel clearly bringing out all the facts and expressing surprise at the manner in which he, who had always been foremost in giving the fullest cooperation to the Government of India and States Ministry, should have been treated in the matter.[1] This, however, was to no avail and Sardar Patel wrote to the Maharaja in reply refuting any implication of pressure by the officers of the States Ministry.[2] In the same letter the Maharaja was also informed of the Nawab of Loharu's having signed the merger agreement. This is yet another example of the way in which the process of merger was being carried out.

But the sudden switch in the policy of the new Government of India in respect of the larger States which had even in the draft Constitution[3] been declared as viable units and which

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 1252/IX of 1947; Maharaja Sadul Singh's letter dated 12.2.1948 to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
2. Ibid, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's letter of the 20th February 1948 to the Maharaja.
3. Kanwar Jaswant Singh of Daudsar's affidavit.

could maintain their separate identity, is rather hard to explain. Moreso, because the declared attitude of the Indian leaders and those at the helm of affairs had been clear on the point, Mahatma Gandhi had once told Sir Mirza Ismail that all he asked of the princes was that they should become constitutional heads of their States and let their people govern themselves under their aegis.[1] Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had in December 1946 stated in the Constituent Assembly in unequivocal terms that the form of government in the States was solely the concern of the people and if they desired to have the monarchical form it was open to them to have it and that he would not like to interfere.[2] Again in April, 1947 Pandit Nehru said in the same body that while a decision for a Republic for the whole of India was being taken it did not bar any State from continuing the monarchical form of government provided that it fitted in the larger picture of freedom.[3] Sardar Patel had in his statement of the 5th July, 1947 given assurance to the rulers that except on the subjects on which the accession of the States was being asked for, in other matters the autonomous existence of the States would be scrupulously respected. Sardar Patel had also made it expressly clear to Maharaja Sadul Singh in his letters[4] that the States Ministry accepted any proposals for merger only when it was satisfied that it had the support both of the ruler and the people. Even V.P.Menon stated in his press conference at Delhi on the 29th March, 1948 that the bigger States like Cochin, Travancore, Mysore, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Bikaner and Bhopal, would stand as

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1. Sir Mirza Ismail; My Public Life, p. 133
2. Constituent Assembly Debates, pp.56-61; Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's resolution regarding aims and objectives moved on the 13th December, 1946.
3. Ibid, p. 351; Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru while moving the resolution on the report of the States Committee on the 28th April, 1947.
4. Sardar Patel's letters dated 5.1.1948 and 20.2.1948 to Maharaja Sadul Singh.

independent units and that the number of such unions and units would be twenty-five. Mr. Gadgil while speaking in the Parliament on behalf of the States Minister on the 15th March, 1948, re-affirmed the Government's declared policy that the States which had individual representation on the Constituent Assembly would be treated as separate viable units and that there would be no objection to their remaining separate autonomous units if they so desired.

Bikaner was a viable unit in every sense of the term. It satisfied all the conditions regarding population, revenue and individual representation in the Constituent Assembly. Its administration was progressive and democratic and the ruler had always been infused with the highest sense of patriotism and had always supported the cause of India's Independence. It could not be argued in the case of Bikaner that the step was taken in response to any popular demand for better government as the State already had a legislature since 1913, the first of its kind in the Rajputana States and one of the first few amongst all the Indian States. It had a separate judiciary, a mile-stone of good government. Besides, it was served with a net-work of hospitals and dispensaries throughout the State.Bikaner could boast of having the finest and the best equipped hospitals in northern India. Education of the people was well cated for and Bikaner boasted of many colleges with an elaborate base of schools of all grades. All important towns in the State had municipalities, district boards and the Panchayat system, and cooperative societies were duly functioning Bikaner was particularly proud of its first-class network of railways and communications and its efficient electrification of towns and villages. The irrigation of the northern portions of the Bikaner State had further added to the improvement of the lot of the people and with the Bhakra Canal on the anvil, the prospects of Bikaner's yearly income reaching five crore mark was possible in the foreseeable future. The State was solvent and had enough money to spend on public amenities. A sum of Rs.4.86 crores handed over to the Rajasthan exchequer,

the highest amongst the Rajputana States, amply justifies this.[1] The privy purse of the ruler had been separated since 1902 and fixed at a reasonable percentage. Thus the State was practically functioning on a modern democratic system in which civil liberties were guaranteed and providing the maximum of amenities to the people was the cherished objective of the Government.

Suddenly negotiations were started in November 1948 by the States Ministry and its representative V.P.Menon, firstly regarding the terms and conditions that would be acceptable to the ruler in case he decided upon integration with greater Rajasthan. Then in December, 1948 V.P.Menon visited Bikaner when he met certain leading citizens and ascertained their wishes regarding the integration of Bikaner. From a report regarding the proceedings of this meeting,[2] it transpires that in the meeting, at which Mr. C.S.Venkatachar the then Prime Minister of Bikaner was also present, Mr.Menon explained to the audience the benefits likely to accrue by the integration of the State, such as the reduction in administrative expenditure. He also stressed that no other persons than the leaders of the country like Pandit Jawharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel were better placed to decide as to what was

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1. It may be remembered that Bikaner lies in the Thar Desert. When Maharaja Ganga Singh succeeded to the gaddi in 1887, the State's income was 18 lacs. In the reign of Maharaja Ganga Singh and Maharaja Sadul Singh this income touched the highest peak of 3.50 crores. This was only possible through hard work and good planning. Nature and the terrain were all against prosperity and yet determined men were able to achieve this.

2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 412/XXV, part II- Integration of Rajputana States. The author also heard the discussions himself.

good for the people and added that when these leaders said that integration of the State was in their interests, it was so, and that the people should have faith in their words. It is recorded that when Pandit Laxmi Narain, a leading advocate and an honoured citizen, who was amongst the audience raised the question of the plebicite being taken to ascertain the wishes of the people, V.P. Menon resented the remarks and said that in no other State such demand had been made and asked the audience to have faith in the leaders and do as they desired. This feeling against merger is more than possible as Bikaner was a well-run State. This was patently contradictory to what Sardar Patel had clearly stated only ten months earlier that no mergers would be brought about without consulting the people of that State. Pandit Suraj Karan Acharya, a top-ranking advocate, another member of the audience, asked if the matter had already been decided or was open for their consultation, to which, the report adds, Mr. Menon replied that the matter had already been decided and that the Government of India would accomplish the integration scheme. V.P.Menon further added that the Government of India in the initial stages wanted only succession for the sake of facility as they did not want the 560 States to remain independent.[1]

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1. It is possible that the viable States could have continued with governors, their administrative territorial boundaries being preserved without dislocation of life.

   Alternatively, the rulers of the viable units could have continued in the shape of appointed governors for the first few years. We only have to look at Mysore to see how the Maharaja was made the governor of Mysore and he continued for fifteen years as such. Sadar-i-Riyasat of Jammu and Kashmir is also another example of the same thing.

Referring to the Instrument of Accession, V.P.Menon said that no democratic government could bind down the future of a country by such assurances. On a question being raised as to why at all the signatures of the Maharaja were necessary when the matter had been so arbitrarily decided upon, Mr. Menon is reported to have remarked that the signatures were necessary as a matter of legal formality.

From these facts one is led to deduce that the apparently sudden shift in policy from forging a constitutional link with the States and removing the vacuum created by the lapse of paramountcy to their complete integration, appears in retrospect to have been a pre-determined policy and there was nothing to prevent the new Dominion from making promises with mental reservations.[1] It is, however, possible that the sudden change in the Government of India's stand from the continuance of certain States as viable units to complete merger, might have been precipitated by the unfortunate happenings in Hyderabad, Junagadh and Jodhpur.[2]

Maharaja Sadul Singh's surprise at the switch in the Government's policy of the viable units to merger is observed quite clearly in his confidential note[3] in which Maharaja Sadul Singh clearly writes "Bikaner has been included in the category of viable units and considered as such till now. How this change has suddenly taken place?

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1. Leonard Mosley, Op.cit. p. 173.

   "As there was nothing to prevent the new dominion, after the transfer of power, extending its functions through the State Department, these limitations and safeguards could obviously be made valueless in due course, and in fact quickly became so."

2. V. P. Menon, The story of the Integration of the Indian Union, pp. 112-113.

2. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 412/GN-XXV.

Why then this coer$ion?" Subsequent points on the list indicate that the demand for merger was pressed by the Rajputana Regional Council of the All India States Peoples Conference which incidentally had only one representative namely, Raghuvar Dayal Goel[1] from Bikaner and he too was a non-Bikaneri. This regional Council was dominated by Gokulbhai Bhatt of Sirohi and Hira Lal Shastri of Jaipur, all of whom were defeated in the first general elections. The unpopularity of Mr. Goel as the representative of the people of Bikaner is proved by his polling only about 6000 votes against the author in the 1952 first general elections for the Bikaner-Churu Parliamentary seat$, the author polling 1,17,926 votes.[2]

Further discussions took place with Sardar Patelm, Mr. Menon on the 5th December, 10th December and 11th December, 1948 and in February 1949, only two months later, integration was finally decided upon and on the 7th April, 1949, the integration of the Bikaner State into the Greater Rajasthan union took place. The total time taken from the announcement by Sardar Patel as Minister of States that the viable units would continue and the integration of the States in 1949 was about 18 months.

While looking back at the question of merger of the States ánr criticism is not to the merger of the States themselves, but to the way in which it was brought about after assurances to the contrary given ab lib by the top-most leaders of India. While the author himself has been

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1. Mr. Goel was also a Minister in the Rajasthan Council before the first general elections in which he was defeated.
2. The author has been an M.P. from Bikaner-Churu from 1952 to 1957, then was re-elected in 1957 from Bikaner-Churu and Ganganagar, a double member constituency, when he won the election against his Congress opposition by almost 99000 vote margin. In 1962 the author was re-elected and this time the Congress did not set up a candidate. The author contested as an Independent ~~at~~ all the three elections which he won.

an ardent supporter of the merger system and the ushering in of democratic institutions in the Indian States, nevertheless, the forcing of merger on the people of the States without taking their opinion was hardly democratic. It would have been much better had the Government of India at the time of the accession of the States to the Indian union declared their policy that the ultimate merger of the States would be their goal, immediately or in progressive stages, While admitting that this might have presented some difficulties, nevertheless, a man of Sardar Patel's statesmanship could have surmounted these difficulties and brought about the ultimate unification of India.

For the glory of our national Government after the rapid change that came about in the life of our country and the bloodless revolution that took place in India culminating in our Independence - one of the greatest changes in the world- it was essential to keep the pledged word to restore confidence in the minds of the patriotic people. Quick changes, broken pledges and irratic constitutional changes are steps which often lead to lack of faith in the Government by the people who have longed to serve their country well.

Knowing Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, as we do, to be a thoroughly outspoken and honest man, we were impressed when he spoke out his mind on the 13th December 1946 in the Constituent Assembly on future of the States. It would, therefore, be interesting to try and find out at what stage the Government of India began to think differently and change over from the policy of acceptance of viable units to total integration. Pandit Nehru said in the Constituent Assembly:-

> "Our intention regarding the States must be clearly understood.....It (the resolution) imposes nothing on the States against their will.....It is quite possible that the people may like to have their Rajas. The decision will rest with them.....If a part within it (the republic)desires

to have its own type of administration, it will be at liberty to have it.....There is no incongruity or impossibility about a certain definite form of administration in the States, provided there is complete freedom and responsible government there and the people really are incharge. If monarchical figure heads are approved by the people of the State, of a particular State whether I like it or not, I certainly will not like to interfere." 1

After four and a half months, while moving the resolution on the Report of the States Committee, on 28th April 1947 he again said:-

".....While we were deciding ~~to~~ in favour of a republic for the whole of India, that did not bar any State from continuing the monarchical form of government so far as that was concerned provided, of course, that they fitted in the larger picture of freedom and provided I hope, that there was the same measure of freedom and responsible government in the State." 2

Only nine weeks later on the 5th July 1947 Sardar Patel in a statement in the White Paper spoke as follows:-

"The States have already accepted the basic principle that for defence, foreign affairs and communication they would come into the Indian Union. We ask no more of them than accession on these three subjects in which the common interests of the country are involved. In other matters we would scrupulously respect their autonomous existence."[3]

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1. Private Secretary to the Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No:412/GNXXV, Integration of Rajputana States.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

Six months later in a letter addressed to Maharaja Sadul Singh on the 5th January 1948, Sardar Patel further clarified the position:-

> ".....I wish to make this quite clear to Your Highness that we do not ourselves initiate or encourage any merger proposal; nor do we accept any such proposal unless we are satisfied that it has the support and backing of both the ruler and the people concerned."1

On 7th January 1948 Mr. V.P. Menon said that a criterion, taking into account the income, the population and the possibility of development in each State, had been laid down and would be applied. There was no question of suggesting that the merger should include those States which had individual representation in the Constituent Assembly.[2]

A little over six weeks later Sardar Patel in his letter of 20th February, 1948 to the Maharaja of Bikaner wrote:-

> "I have made it clear more than once that the States Ministry would support a scheme of merger only when the ruler and the people are agreed on this subject. We have constantly maintained that position." 3

N.V. Gadgil about three weeks later on the 15th March 1948 speaking in Parliament deputizing for the States Minister said:-

> "The States which have individual representation on the Constituent Assembly have been assured by the Government of India from time to time that they will be treated as separate viable units....There is no desire on our part in any way to compel or coerce them into merger or integration."4

Two weeks later, on the 29th March 1948 in a statement at a Press Conference Mr. V.P. Menon said:-

> "The bigger States like Cochin, Travancore, Mysore, Jodhpur, Jaipur, Bikaner, Bhopal etc., would stand as independent units and the number of unions and units will be 25....It was not the Government's intention to touch any of the major States like Cochin, Travancore, Mysore, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Bhopal, Patiala etc.,..... The Government stood

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 412/GNXXV.
2. Proceedings of the Meeting of H.E. the Governor General with ruling Princes and representatives on 7.1.48.
3. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No.: 1252/IX of 1947.
4. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No: 412/GN XXV

> by the States Ministry's undertaking that viable units would be allowed to stand by themselves unless they voluntarily came in...."[1]

On the 14th November, 1948, only eight and a half months after Mr. Menon's previous stand of the 15th March 1948 he contradicted himself when he raised a question in a discussion at Delhi about the merger of the States of Bikaner, Jodhpur, Jaipur etc.,[2]

Further, from a secret list of points dated 9.11.48 drawn up by Maharaja Sadul Singh for talks with the States Ministry it appears that the merger of the State had been suggested about this time. Point 2 of the list says:

> "2. Bikaner has been included in the category of viable units and considered as such till now. How this change has suddenly taken place? Why then this coercion?"

The records indicate that the question of merger of the Bikaner, Jaipur and Jodhpur States having been brought up by the States Ministry during meetings with their rulers, the Maharaja of Bikaner handed to V.P. Menon on 6th December 1948 a list of provisional terms that were demanded by the rulers in case they agreed to integrate and these terms were duly agreed upon by V.P. Menon. The remarks of V.P. Menon at the meeting held by him in Bikaner with some leading citizens of the place on the 7th December 1948 at the Durbar Hall, Lallgarh Palace, clearly indicate that an unilatral decision had already been taken by the Government of India for the merger of the viable States also and that what was left to be done was only to secure formal and legal acceptance by the rulers. After a few more meetings in December, 1948, and the months following, the merger of Bikaner, Jodhpur, Jaipur and Jaisalmer had been

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1. Private Secretary to Maharaja of Bikaner's office file No. 412/GN XXV.
2. Notes of the meeting of Maharaja Sadul Singh with Mr. V.P. Menon on 14.11.1948 at Delhi.

finally decided upon and on the 7th April, 1949 it was accomplished. What may appear to a historian most amusing are some methods used by the Government of India to get the rulers to accept merger by touching their vanity. In India, for example, the rulers had gun salutes[1] ranging from twenty-one guns to nine guns at the lower rung of the ladder, not counting the non-salute States. The British are often believed to have used the increase in dynastic gun salutes and granting personal gun salutes as a form of temptation. In many cases the offer of life Rajpramukhships was sufficient enticement for a ruler to accept the merger. These life Rajpramukhships later remained in existence for a couple of years only. Obviously, the rulers had seen the writing

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1. 19 Guns:

1. Maharana of Udaipur.

17 Guns:

1. Maharaja of Bikaner.
2. Maharaja of Bharatpur.
3. Maharaja of Bundi.
4. Maharaja of Jaipur.
5. Maharaja of Jodhpur.
6. Maharaja of Karauli.
7. Maharao of Kota.
8. Nawab of Tonk.

15 Guns:

1. Maharaja of Alwar.
2. Maharawal of Banswara.
3. Maharaj-Rana of Dholpur.
4. Maharawal of Dungarpur.
5. Maharaja of Idar.
6. Maharawal of Jaisalmer.
7. Maharaja of Kishangarh.
8. Maharawal of Partapgarh.
9. Maharao of Sirohi.

13 Guns

1. Maharaj-Rana of Jhalawar.

on the wall. The question was, however, of who accepted merger first and thereby gain certain personal advantages. These gains came in the shape of life Rajpramukhships, perhaps slightly higher privy purses, concessions of various types, like free electricity and water, a few additional palaces in the inventary of personal properties, etc. Special privy purses were given to some rulers who were in bad health and these additional amounts were also subject to negotiations. Unlike Bikaner and a few other more enlightened States, there were many States which right upto the time of integration had no fixed privy purses separate from the State exchequer. Adjustment of what comprised State funds and what fell into the category of personal property of the ruler was a matter of pure negotiations. Then again fixing of allowances for Dowager Maharanis, who, according to the agreements, were to get a separate allowance from the State, was also subject to negotiations. Allotment of funds from State funds to the ruler's children, particularly where no fixed privy purses existed, were all negotiable matters. Dowager Maharanis were given a separate allowance from the State. All those Maharanis who became dowager after the integration, however, received their allowances, from the privy purses of the rulers. In any case personal vanity and jealousies amongst certain rulers, inter se, who perhaps for generations had been figbting for seniority and some of them, who after becoming Rajpramukhs, considered themselves super-rulers of all the States of the union under their Rajpramukhship, thus possibly satisfying a long-felt ego. This desire was obviously satisfied because of the technical position of life-Rajpramukhs having been accepted. Fortunately, this highly undemocratic objectionable, and undesirable institution came to an end very soon.

We only have to examine carefully the various assurances given by the Government of India and its new leaders to come to an impartial conclusion. It shows that having accomplished the accesion of the Indian States, the Government of India was naturally in a far more powerful position to dictate their terms with regard to integration of the States. As students of history we have to take an impartial view of the situation. While there could be no argument with the philosophy of democratisation of the States to bring them on par with the rest of British India, nevertheless, the existence of a State or States which had carried on for centuries is asmuch justified as the continuance of any of the new States in India since Independence. Changes come about in the history of a nationa and what at a particular time may be considered normal, may later on be considered as an anachronism or the reverse may be the case. The same way, had the larger States been allowed to continue and had later on become part 'A' States on par with other States of the country such as Mysore, there is no gainsaying the fact that public opinion would have readily accepted them. The fact that public opinion in most of the well administered viable States was not in favour of merger, was borne out by the general election where we find that nearly every ruler who contested in the 1952 general elections even against the mighty Congress, nearly always won the elections. In a democracy there could be no greater barometer of the public mind than the general elections. When Maharaja Sadul Singh returned from England a few months after Integration of the States, he received the most tumultous public welcome when he went to visit Sri Laxminathji's temple - a reception the like of which is not often come across. The author was in the car with his father, Maharaja Sadul Singh and a normal

half hour run took five hours because the enthusiasm and love of the people was so great.

Sardar Patel had often said that Government would not accept proposals for merger unless they were satisfied that it had the support and backing of both the ruler and the people concerned. It would be interesting to see that while the rulers were either coerced or enticed into accepting integration, so far as the people were concerned, they were never consulted and neither was there any suitable machinery by which the Government of India could consult them. The argument that the Praja Parishad was the voice of the people had been completely demolished by the fact of the first general elections when the top leaders of this organisation toppled down in Rajasthan.

While the viable units had sufficient incomes to develop their States to bring them on a level with other more advanced States of Indian Union, it may also be remembered that after integration crores of rupees are being advanced by the Centre as Central aid from the Five Year Plan funds and from other sources to develop these latter States. The plea that one united State would have surplus money which was being wasted on the various administrative heads of the States has also proved wrong. The Rajasthan Government, ever since it was formed, has been short of funds year after year. It may be noted that none of the Indian States had been the recipients of aid from the Government of India in the shape of Central aid or Five Year Plan allocation whether big or small.[1]

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1. It may be remembered that the Gang Canal project was totally financed by the Bikaner State when its income was very little. No Central aid was possible. The Rajasthan Canal today is being financed to a very large extent by the Centre. That since the State Railways were not under the Centre before, nearly 1000 miles of Bikaner State Railway were likewise financed from the State exchequer without any Central aid. The same was true for the State Armed forces also. These burdens have since been greatly lightened for the successor Union by the Centre taking over Railways, Defence and some of the major irrigation and other projects.

If the viable units had continued and the volume of Central aid to them had been the same as given to other States[1], there was no reason why both the types of States could not have progressed equally.

On the other hand, the sincerity of the princes and their sacrifices in the larger interests of the country and specially those of Maharaja Sadul Singh cannot better be described than in the words of the late Dr. Rajendra Prasad who said:

> "By placing the interests of the country before their own the princes played a memorable part in the process of India's unification. The help which the late Maharaja Sadul Singhji gave in this connection, has been thankfully acknowledged by the great Indian leader and Minister of States at that time, namely, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel."2

The statue was raised by the voluntary contribution of his erstwhile subjects in memory of the late Maharaja who died a premature death striving for the welfare of his people and parted with his ancient heritage for the greater glory of his mother country and so the five century old saga of Bikaner's history comes to an end. The desert soil of Bikaner produced fighters strong and true. The part that Bikaner played in the unification of India is, therefore, a matter of much pardonable pride for all of us.

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1. Former provinces.
2. Dr. Rajendra Prasad's speech dated 2.9.1954 at the unveiling of the statue of Maharaja Sadul Singhji at Bikaner.